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Pompeo: US. may hit more Iranian leaders if Iran retaliates

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military may strike more Iranian leaders if the Islamic Republic retaliates for the Trump administration's killing of Tehran's most powerful general last week by attacking Americans or American interests, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Sunday. As Pompeo conducted a round of TV interviews to explain President Donald Trump's decision to target Iranian Gen. Qassem So-

leimani, the repercussions from that attack played out: The Iraqi Parliament called on the 5,200 U.S. forces in the country to leave; the U.S. military coalition in Baghdad suspended training of Iraqi forces to concentrate on defending coalition troops; and in Beirut, the Lebanese Hezbollah chief said U.S. forces throughout the Mideast are fair targets for retaliation.

Continued on Next Page



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivers a statement on Iraq and Syria, at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago property, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019, in Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press





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Continued from Front

Even a Trump ally, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., called the move by Iraqi lawmakers "a bit concerning."

In Tehran, Iranian state television reported that the country will no longer abide by any limits of the 2015 nuclear deal it signed with the United States and other world powers. Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal in 2018 and stepped up economic sanctions on Tehran — actions that accelerated a cycle of hostilities leading to the Soleimani killing.

The State Department had no immediate comment on Iran reportedly abandoning the nuclear deal, a move that holds the prospect of Iran accelerating its production of materials for a nuclear weapon.

Trump continued issuing warnings to Iran by tweet. "These Media Posts will serve as notification to the United States Congress that should Iran strike any U.S. person or target, the United States will quickly & fully strike back, & perhaps in a disproportionate manner," he wrote Sunday afternoon. "Such legal notice is not required, but is given nevertheless!"

Democrats in Congress complained about the administration's failure to consult with legislative leaders before conducting the drone attack Friday against Soleimani, and the White House faced a barrage of questions about the killing's legality. Pompeo said the administration would have been "culpably negligent" in its duty to protect the United States if it had not killed Soleimani, although he did not provide evidence for his previous claims that Soleimani was plotting imminent attacks on Americans.

Instead of arguing that an attack had been imminent, Pompeo said it was inevitable.

"We watched him continue to actively build out for what was going to be a significant attack — that's what we believed — and we made the right decision," he said, adding later: "We continue to prepare for whatever it is the Iranian regime may put in front of us within the next 10 minutes, within the next 10

days, and within the next 10 weeks."

Congressional Democrats were skeptical.

"I really worry that the actions the president took will get us into what he calls another endless war in the Middle East. He promised we wouldn't have that," said Chuck Schumer of New York, the Senate's top Democrat.

Schumer said Trump lacks the authority to engage militarily with Iran and Congress needs a new war powers resolution "to be a check on this president." To which Pompeo said: "We have all the authority we need to do what we've done to date."

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said the administration violated the Constitution by not consulting with Congress in advance.

"It's also important because one, you potentially get members of Congress to buy in ahead of time, and two, they may ask that hard question that's not asked in an insular group," Warner said.

Congressional staffs got their first briefings from the administration on Friday, and members are expected to be briefed this week. Pompeo appeared on six news shows while Trump kept silent on the final day of his holiday break in Florida. The appearances by the top American diplomat appeared aimed at dissuading Iran from launching a major retaliation for the Soleimani killing. The Iranians have said the U.S. should expect a strong response.

They have a range of options, from cyberattacks to military assaults.

It was unclear whether the administration would attempt a back door communication with Iran in pursuit of its stated goal of "de-escalation" of tensions. Retired Gen. David Petraeus, an ex-CIA director and former commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, said he believes the administration needs a strategy for tamping down the chances of all-out war.

"I think the real question for the United States is, will there be a diplomatic initiative that says, OK, look, this is not headed in a good



A supporter of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah wears the words "powerful revenge" on her hand, ahead of the leader's televised speech in a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020 following the U.S. airstrike in Iraq that killed Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Associated Press

direction. We truly do want to de-escalate. Everyone is going to lose if this continues to ratchet upward. Can we now sit down and talk," Petraeus said.

Pompeo declined to say whether he had sought to communicate with Iran since Friday. He stressed the U.S. resolve to hold Iran accountable for its interventions in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in the Mideast. Pompeo said the Obama administration had tried to "challenge and attack everybody who was running around with an AK-47 or a piece of indirect artillery. We've made a very different approach. We've told the Iranian regime, 'Enough. You can't get away with using proxy forces and think your homeland will be safe and secure.' We're going to respond against the actual decision-makers, the people who are causing this threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He said the cost to Iran if it uses proxy forces to hit American targets will come down on no just those proxies, which are present in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and elsewhere.

"They will be borne by Iran and its leadership itself," Pompeo said. "Those are important things the Iranian leadership needs to put in its calculus as it makes its next decision."

Pompeo tip-toed around questions about Trump's

tweet Saturday threatening to attack Iranian cultural sites, a military action that likely would be illegal under the laws of armed conflict and the U.N. charter.

Trump wrote that if Iran were to strike "any Americans, or American assets, we have targeted 52 Iranian sites (representing the 52 American hostages taken by Iran many years ago), some at a very high level & important to Iran & Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD."

Pompeo said any U.S. military strikes inside Iran would be legal.

"We'll behave inside the system," Pompeo said. "We always have and we always

will." One U.S. national security official said Trump's threat had caught many in the administration off guard and prompted calls for others in the government, including Pompeo, to clarify the matter. The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly to the issue, said clarification was necessary to affirm that the U.S. military would not intentionally commit war crimes.

Oona Hathaway, an international law professor at Yale and a former national security law official in the Defense Department's legal office, said in an interview that Trump's threat amounted to "a pretty clear promise of commission of a war crime." □

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Solidarity march against anti-Semitism, acts of hate

By REBECCA GIBIAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Throngs of demonstrators joined by elected officials walked solemnly across the Brooklyn Bridge in a solidarity march Sunday against anti-Semitism and all acts of hate. The "No Hate, No Fear" march was organized by New York's Jewish community in the wake of recent anti-Semitic attacks, including a knife attack at a Hanukkah celebration north of New York City that left five people wounded and a fatal shootout at a kosher

grocery in Jersey City, New Jersey. The crowds of participants, thousands strong, jammed the streets in lower Manhattan as they waited their turns to get across the bridge. "It is wonderful that we are doing this and sad that we still have to do it," said Claudia Stoller, 31, of Manhattan. "But it was never lost on me that the Jewish community could always be targeted and should always be ready to be strong." Tiana Gianci, 44, came up


from her home in Ellicott City, Maryland, to take part in the march, and said it was even more important to her after a recent trip to the part of Europe where her family comes from, where she learned about their experience in the Holocaust. "Discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, is repugnant to every value that New Yorkers hold dear, and repugnant to every value that this country represents," Cuomo said as he lauded the crowd of several thousand that turned out in support of the march. □





People march across the Brooklyn Bridge in solidarity with the Jewish community after recent string of anti-semitic attacks throughout the greater New York area, on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020 in New York.

Associated Press

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Trump returns to Washington to face a pair of challenges

By JONATHAN LEMIRE

WASHINGTON (AP) — His 17-day holiday stay at his Florida resort over, President Donald Trump returned to the White House on Sunday night facing twin challenges: the fallout from the strike he ordered to kill an Iranian general and his looming impeachment trial in the Senate.

The dueling images — one of potential chaos in the Middle East, the other a politicized ritual occurring for only the third time in the nation's history — will shape a defining month of Trump's presidency, one that comes just before the first votes of the 2020 campaign are cast.

Even before Air Force One touched down outside the divided nation's capital, Trump faced growing questions from Democrats fearful that the killing of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani endangered Americans in the region and may have been an effort to distract from the president's political crisis back home.

"Next week, the president of the United States could



President Donald Trump speaks during an "Evangelicals for Trump Coalition Launch" at King Jesus International Ministry, Friday, Jan. 3, 2020, in Miami.

Associated Press

be facing an impeachment trial in the Senate. We know he's deeply upset about that. And I think people are reasonably asking, 'Why this moment?'" Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat running for president, said on CNN's "State of the Union."

"Why does he pick now to take this highly inflammatory, highly dangerous action that moves us closer to war?" the Massachusetts senator said.

In the hours before Trump's return, tensions simmered half a world away as hundreds of thousands flooded streets Sunday in Iran to walk alongside a casket carrying the remains of Soleimani while Iraq's parliament voted in favor of a resolution calling for an end of the foreign military presence in their nation, an effort aimed at expelling the 5,000 U.S. troops stationed there over the war against the Islamic State group.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who appeared on the full gamut of Washington Sunday morning news shows, defended the strike, which killed Soleimani at the Baghdad airport, as part of a deterrence "strategy to convince the Iranian regime to behave like a normal nation."

"The American people should know that we will not waver. We will be bold in protecting American interests and we will do so in a way that is consistent with the rule of law," Pompeo told CNN.

The conflict is rooted in Trump pulling out of Iran's atomic accord and imposing sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy. But it was not at the forefront of Trump's agenda when his vacation began. Trump departed for Mar-a-Lago, nestled against the Atlantic Ocean in tony Palm Beach on Dec. 20, just two days after the House of Representatives voted largely on party lines to approve two articles of impeachment against him over his pressure of Ukraine to investigate a potential political foe, former vice president Joe Biden.

During his stay, the president visited his nearby golf course nearly every day and kept his public appearances to a minimum. But behind the scenes, he held a series of meetings and phone calls to prepare for what lies ahead.

Trump spoke to some of his closest Republican allies in the Senate, including Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, about the upcoming trial. Though the details of the trial remain unclear, including when it will begin, the outcome seems all but certain, as the Republican-led Senate will almost surely not remove Trump from office.

But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has delayed transmitting the articles of impeachment to the upper chamber, a necessary step before the trial can begin, because she has demanded assurances from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., that the pro-

ceedings be fair.

McConnell, who has been dismissive of the request, has begun negotiations with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York over the contours of the trial, including whether witnesses would be called. The president had pushed to call witnesses to make it a showy trial — including Biden's son and the whistleblower who first reported the pressure to Ukraine — believing he can convince the American public of his innocence. But Graham and others have implored him to let the Senate handle the matter as expeditiously as possible.

Trump has fumed that impeachment will be a permanent stain on his legacy but he has listened to advisers who believe it could be a political opportunity, pointing to polling that shows it playing poorly with independents in a trio of vital Rust Belt battleground states. The president has also mused about holding a series of rallies after the likely Senate acquittal.

But even as Trump held meetings at Mar-a-Lago about the trial and his upcoming re-election campaign, which will move into a new phase when the Iowa caucus is held in less than a month, the Iran matter moved to the forefront. Tensions between the nations erupted after an attack killed an American contractor at a joint U.S.-Iraqi base. And after days of deliberations with his inner circle of national security advisers, Trump opted for the most dramatic response, the drone strike that killed Soleimani. Despite Tehran's call for vengeance, Trump did not back away from his trademark bellicose bluster.

"The United States just spent Two Trillion Dollars on Military Equipment," Trump tweeted early Sunday. "We are the biggest and by far the BEST in the World! If Iran attacks an American Base, or any American, we will be sending some of that brand new beautiful equipment their way...and without hesitation!" □

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1 of 2 escapees from troubled Mississippi prison in custody

By The Associated Press
 One of two prisoners believed to have escaped from one of several Mississippi prisons recently rocked by violence is back in custody, authorities said early Sunday.
 The Mississippi Department of Corrections tweeted just before 3:30 a.m. that David May was in custody. Further details weren't immediately released.
 Gov. Phil Bryant on Saturday said via Twitter that he directed "the use of all necessary assets and personnel" to find the two inmates who escaped Saturday from the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman. Five inmates have died in prison violence since Dec. 29; three of those deaths have occurred at Parchman.
 The corrections department said in a Facebook post that May, 42, and Dillion Williams, 27, were discovered missing from Parchman during an "emergency count" about 1:45 a.m. Saturday. May is serving a life sentence for two aggravated assault convictions in Harrison County, and Williams is serving a 40-year sentence for residential burglary and aggravated assault in Marshall County.
 The state Department of Public Safety deployed state troopers and the highway patrol's special operations group to help the Department of Corrections find the two inmates and to help restore order at the troubled facility that they escaped from, Bryant said.
 The department said via Twitter on Saturday afternoon that there were no major disturbances occurring at Parchman.
 "There was a minor fire at Unit 30 earlier this week. That fire, set by an inmate, was immediately extinguished. Like other facilities in the prison system, the prison has limited movement," the department

tweeted.
 Parchman is a series of cell blocks scattered across thousands of acres of farmland in Mississippi's Delta region. Inmates who escape their cells sometimes don't make it off the property.
 Mississippi's outgoing prisons chief said Friday that four of the five killings of inmates since Sunday stem from gang violence, as guards struggle to maintain control of restive inmates.
 Corrections Commissioner Pelicia Hall said the department won't confirm the names of the gangs "for security purposes," but relatives of inmates who spoke to The Associated Press and other news outlets said there's an ongoing confrontation between the Vice Lords and Black Gangster Disciples.
 It wouldn't be the first time the two gangs have warred behind bars in Mississippi, with previous confrontations at Parchman and other prisons over the past 15 years. A 2015 survey found nearly 3,000 Black Gangster Disciple members and nearly 2,000 Vice Lords in prisons statewide.
 "These are trying times for the Mississippi Department of Corrections," Hall said Friday.
 All state prisons statewide remained locked down Saturday, Bryant said, with inmates confined to cells, and no visitors allowed.
 The first of five inmates identified as dying was Terrandance Dobbins, 40, who died Sunday at the South Mississippi Correctional Institute in Leakesville. Two days later, Walter Gates, 25, was stabbed and several other inmates were injured at Parchman during a fight that spread to multiple units of the sprawling prison. Then on Thursday, Gregory Emary, 26, was killed at the Chickasaw County Regional Correctional Facility, a county-run jail that holds state inmates. Also Thursday, 32-year-old Roosevelt Holliman was fa-



This combination of photos made available by the Mississippi Department of Corrections on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020 shows inmates David May, 42, and Dillion Williams, 27.

Associated Press

tally stabbed at Parchman in a fracas that led to multiple injuries. Before dawn Friday, Denorris Howell, 36, was found dead in his cell at Parchman.
 Corrections officials have repeatedly not answered questions about how many people overall have been injured, or whether there

have been other violent incidents in prisons. Mississippi's prison system has struggled to fill guard vacancies, with Hall saying it's difficult to attract people with salaries that start below \$25,000 a year. Some guards end up bringing illegal drugs and cell-phones into prisons. □

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California eyes climate bond to prepare for disasters

By **ADAM BEAM**
SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)

— In a state burdened by billions of dollars in wildfire damage, California lawmakers are hoping for an advance loan before the next climate-fueled catastrophe hits.

Lawmakers in the Democratic-dominated state Legislature return to work Monday for the second year of a two-year session. Their to-do list includes a \$4.2 billion climate bond, an ambitious proposal to borrow money before they need it to prepare for the types of natural disasters that have plagued the state. The disasters are so destructive they forced the nation's largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric, to file for bankruptcy last year.

The borrowing proposal is one of dozens of holdover bills from last year that are still alive in 2020 but must pass at least one legislative chamber by the end of January to have a chance at becoming law. The logjam is complicated by an accelerated election cycle that puts many lawmakers on primary election ballots in March instead of June, making it less likely for politically risky proposals to advance.

"We have kind of a perfect storm," said veteran Democratic political consultant Andrew Acosta.

Catastrophic wildfires have destroyed thousands of homes, generating billions of dollars in insurance claims and costing taxpayers billions more in cleanup costs. The bulk of the borrowing proposal, detailed in similar efforts authored by Democrat Ben Allen in the Senate and Democrat Eduardo Garcia in the Assembly, would go toward reducing wildfire



In this Aug. 28, 2019 file photo supporters of a measure to limit when companies can label workers as independent contractors circle the Capitol during a rally in Sacramento, Calif.

Associated Press

risk throughout the state. It also includes money to protect farmland from climate change, bolster the state's scarce water sources and help coastal communities plan for sea level rise.

The \$4.2 billion price tag could grow as lawmakers discuss adding more projects for things like buying solar batteries and fuel cells to keep the lights on at nursing homes and other vulnerable sites when utility companies preemptively shut off electricity to prevent wildfires during windy conditions.

"We've been really good about investing in suppression — in other words, firefighters and helicopters," said Democratic Sen. Henry Stern. "We haven't done that good of a job in prevention."

Passing the Legislature would be the just first step for the climate bond because California can't borrow the funds unless voters approve it. Voters could be weary of more bonds

because the state has borrowed so much money in recent years that officials are having trouble spending it all. Of the \$150 billion in borrowing authorized by voters in recent years, more than \$34 billion has yet to be spent.

"We cannot spend money until projects are ready," state Treasurer Fiona Ma said. "Sometimes it takes 10-plus years to spend money that is authorized in a bond act."

Plus, voters will be asked in March to borrow another \$15 billion to build more public schools, increasing the chances of spending fatigue — especially as California's economy continues to grow, producing record budget surpluses.

Supporters in the Legislature, including Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, recognize the potential peril of asking the public to add to the state's debt. But they believe residents of climate-conscious California will embrace borrowing

aimed at protecting the environment.

"I think if members of the public know that this money is going to issues around climate change, they care about that," Atkins said.

Some Republicans are skeptical, including Assemblyman James Gallagher, whose district includes the town of Paradise, which was mostly destroyed in the deadly 2018 Camp Fire. Instead of borrowing more, Gallagher said the state should use some of the billions of dollars generated every year by its cap-and-trade system to reduce wildfire fuel by better managing forests. He also wants to temporarily block a state law that requires utilities to buy more expensive solar and wind power and upgrade their equipment to make it less likely to spark wildfires during windstorms. Gallagher questioned whether borrowing is the best practice "considering the amount of debt we have right now."

"There are existing dollars in government that I think we could just better target," he said.

Other proposals in legislative limbo include a controversial bill by Sen. Scott Wiener to boost housing density near public transportation by allowing apartment buildings in areas currently zoned for single-family homes. Atkins said Wiener is working on some amendments around "local flexibility" that she said might help the bill make it through the Senate.

If it does, it could find a receptive audience in the Assembly.

"I don't like to comment on pending legislation, but I definitely think there is value in increasing housing density along certain corridors," Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon said.

Potentially overshadowing pending legislation is the fate of Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the nation's largest electric utility, which filed for bankruptcy after facing up to \$30 billion in potential damages from wildfires started by its equipment.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has suggested a potential state takeover if the troubled utility cannot emerge from bankruptcy before the next wildfire season. But legislative leaders have balked at that idea.

Atkins said she has concerns about doing anything that lets PG&E off the hook.

"Then it just transfers the liability to the ratepayers and the taxpayers," Atkins said. "Isn't that what we are trying to avoid?"

Other topics generating interest include proposals addressing housing and homelessness, which Republican leaders in both houses say are key goals. □



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5 dead, 60 hospitalized in Pennsylvania Turnpike crash

GREENSBURG, Pa. (AP) — A deadly crash involving a passenger bus and multiple other vehicles on the Pennsylvania Turnpike left five dead and dozens injured early Sunday, shutting down a large portion of the highway.

Officials said at least 60 people, with victims ranging from 7 to 52 years old, were hospitalized after the crash that happened at 3:40 a.m. in Westmoreland County, around 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of Pittsburgh. Stephen Limani, Pennsylvania State Police spokesperson, said at a press conference that none of the injuries are considered life-threatening, though two patients remain in critical condition. Limani said the bus, operated by a New Jersey-based company called Z & D Tours, was traveling from Rockaway, New Jersey, to Cincinnati, Ohio. It was first struck by two tractor-trailers, then another truck and a passenger car. Photos from the scene show a mangled collision of multiple vehicles including an overturned bus, two tractor-trailers, a passenger car and a smashed FedEx truck that left packages sprawled along the highway.

"It was kind of a chain-reaction crash," Limani said. FedEx did not provide any other details besides that they are cooperating with authorities. A message seeking comment was left Sunday with the bus company.

Limani would not identify those killed or say which vehicles they were traveling in because families have not yet been notified.

There were 25 victims transported to Excelsa Frick Hospital in Mt. Pleasant, Excelsa Health spokeswoman Robin Jennings said. Nine of those patients are under the age of 18.

At least one of the 25 victims initially sent to Excelsa was transported to a nearby trauma center.

"I haven't personally witnessed a crash of this magnitude in 20 years," Pennsylvania Turnpike spokesman Carl DeFebo told WTAE, calling it the worst accident in his decades-long tenure with the turnpike. "It's horrible."

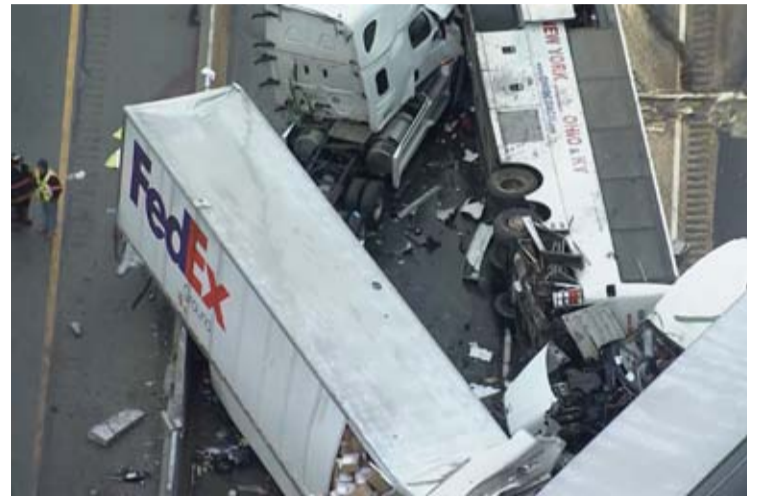
The National Transportation Safety Board announced Sunday that it dispatched a team of more than a dozen to investigate.

Officials said it was too early to determine if weather was a main factor in the crash. The National Weather Service forecast for Westmoreland County early Sunday listed light unknown precipitation and an air temperature just below freezing. Angela Maynard, a tractor-trailer driver from Kentucky, said the roads were wet from snow but not especially icy. Maynard was traveling eastbound on the turnpike when she came upon the crash site and called 911.

"It was horrible," she told The Tribune-Review. She saw lots of smoke but no fire. She and her co-driver found one person trapped in their truck and another lying on the ground.

"I tried to keep him occupied, keep talking, until medical help arrived," Maynard said. "He was in bad shape. He was floating in and out of consciousness." The highway remains

closed in both directions indefinitely. Local fire and emergency medical crews are on scene, along with a hazardous material company cleaning up fuel and other materials. A towing company is getting ready to begin separating the vehicles and getting them cleared. □



This image from video provided by KDKA TV shows the scene near Greensburg, Pa.

Associated Press



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Blowback: Iran abandons nuclear limits after US killing

By **NASSER KARIMI**
JON GAMBRELL
ZEINA KARAM

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The blowback over the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general mounted Sunday as Iran announced it is abandoning the limits contained in the 2015 nuclear deal and Iraq's Parliament called for the expulsion of all American troops from Iraqi soil. The twin developments, if they come to pass, could bring Iran closer to building an atomic bomb and enable the Islamic State group to stage a comeback in Iraq, making the Middle East a far more dangerous and unstable place.

Iranian state television cited a statement by President Hassan Rouhani's administration saying the country would not observe limits on fuel enrichment, on the size of its enriched uranium stockpile and on its research and development activities.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran no longer faces any limitations in operations," a state TV broadcaster said.

In Iraq, meanwhile, lawmakers voted in favor of a resolution calling for an end of the foreign military presence in the country, including the estimated 5,000 U.S. troops stationed to help battle the Islamic State group. The bill is non-binding and subject to approval by the Iraqi government but has the backing of the outgoing prime minister.

The two decisions capped a day of mass mourning over Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, killed in a U.S. drone strike in Bagh-



Iranian lawmakers chant anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans to protest against the U.S. killing of Iranian top general Qassem Soleimani, at the start of an open session of parliament in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

dad on Friday. Hundreds of thousands of people flooded the streets in the cities of Ahvaz and Mashhad to walk alongside the casket of Soleimani, who was the architect of Iran's proxy wars across the Middle East and was blamed for the deaths of hundreds of Americans in suicide bombings and other attacks. Iran insisted that it remains open to negotiations with European partners over its nuclear program. And it did not back off from earlier promises that it wouldn't seek a nuclear weapon.

However, the announcement represents the clearest nuclear proliferation threat yet made by Iran since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord in May 2018. It further raises regional tensions, as Iran's long-time foe Israel has prom-

ised never to allow Iran to produce an atomic bomb. Iran did not elaborate on what levels it would immediately reach in its program. Tehran has already increased its production, begun enriching uranium to 5% and restarted enrichment at an underground facility. While it does not possess uranium enriched to weapons-grade levels of 90%, any push forward narrows the estimated one-year "breakout time" needed for it to have enough material to build a nuclear weapon if it chose to do so.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations watchdog observing Iran's program, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. However, Iran said that its cooperation with the IAEA "will continue as before."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi earlier told journalists that Soleimani's killing would prompt Iranian officials to take an even harsher step away from the nuclear deal.

"In the world of politics, all developments are interconnected," Mousavi said. In Iraq, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said that after the killing of Soleimani, the government has two choices: End the presence of foreign troops in Iraq or restrict their mission to training Iraqi forces. He called for the first option.

Iraqi officials have denounced the airstrike as a violation of the country's sovereignty. The majority of about 180 legislators present in Parliament voted in favor of the troop-removal resolution. It was backed by most Shiite members of Parlia-

ment, who hold a majority of seats. Many Sunni and Kurdish legislators did not show up for the session, apparently because they oppose abolishing the deal.

Asked shortly before the parliamentary vote whether the U.S. would comply with an Iraqi government request for American troops to leave, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would not answer directly. But he added: "It is the United States that is prepared to help the Iraqi people get what it is they deserve and continue our mission there to take down terrorism from ISIS and others in the region."

Amid threats of vengeance from Iran, the U.S.-led military coalition in Iraq said Sunday it is putting the battle against IS militants on hold to focus on protecting its own troops and bases. A U.S. pullout could not only allow the Islamic State to make a comeback but could also enable Iran to deepen its influence in Iraq, which like Iran is a majority-Shiite country.

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, the leader of Iran's major proxy, the militant group Hezbollah, said Soleimani's killing made U.S. military bases, warships and service members across the region fair targets for attacks. A former Revolutionary Guard leader suggested the Israeli city of Haifa and centers like Tel Aviv could be targeted.

Soleimani's killing has escalated the crisis between Tehran and Washington after months of back-and-forth attacks and threats that have put the wider Middle East on edge. □

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Spanish leader fails to form left-wing government on 1st try

MADRID (AP) — Spain's interim Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez failed Sunday on the first of two chances to win the endorsement of the Spanish Parliament to form a left-wing coalition government.

The Socialist leader will have a second opportunity on Tuesday, when the threshold for success is lower and he hopes to have the support needed to constitute a coalition government of his center-left Socialists and the anti-austerity United We Can party. It would be Spain's first coalition government since the return of democracy following the death of dictator Gen. Francisco Franco in 1975.

As expected, Sánchez fell short Sunday, receiving only 166 votes, below the 176 votes needed to reach



Spain's interim Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez speaks at the Spanish Parliament in Madrid, Spain, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

the required absolute majority. Sánchez received backing from his 120 Socialist lawmakers and from the 35

United We Can lawmakers. The rest came from smaller left-wing and regional parties. The lawmakers of the three main right-wing par-

ties and other smaller parties tallied 165 "No" votes. Eighteen lawmakers abstained and one did not cast a vote.

"Let us make this legislature a re-vindication of the best policies, of the best hopes," Sánchez told the 350-seat lower house before the vote.

The bar lowers on Tuesday's second attempt, only requiring a simple majority of more votes for than against. But Sánchez's hopes of success will still depend on abstentions from several smaller parties, including separatist parties from Catalonia and the Basque Country. Support from the Catalan separatist ERC party has come at a heavy political price for Sánchez, who has agreed to open talks between the Spanish government and the Catalan regional government, which is led by fervent separatists, regarding the future of the restive northeastern region. □

Police: Drunk driver kills 6 German tourists in Italy

By NICOLE WINFIELD
ROME (AP) — A drunk driver plowed into a group of young German tourists in northern Italy early Sunday, killing six people and injuring 11, Italian authorities said.

The deadly crash occurred in a village near Valle Aurina, near Bolzano in the Alto Adige region, shortly after 1 a.m. as the Germans were gathering to board their bus.

The largely German-speaking autonomous region of northern Italy, with its ski resorts in the Dolomites and quaint villages around Bolzano, is popular with Ger-

man tourists. The driver of the car had a high blood alcohol content and was driving particularly fast, a Carabinieri police official in Brunico told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to give his name. He said police had concluded that the car crash into pedestrians was not an act of terrorism.

The Lutago volunteer fire service said on Facebook that six people were killed at the scene. The injured, four of whom were in critical condition, were taken to several regional hos-

pitals, including two who were airlifted to a hospital in Innsbruck, Austria, said Bolzano Carabinieri Cmdr. Alessandro Coassin. Coassin said the driver, identified by Italian media as a 28-year-old man from the nearby town of Chienes, was arrested on suspicion of highway manslaughter and injury and was being treated at the hospital in Brunico.

The regional president of Alto Adige, Arno Kompatscher, told a press conference the victims were part of a group of young Germans vacationing in the region. □



Emergency services of the Luttagh voluntary fire brigade secure an accident site after a car drove into a group of people crossing a road in Luttagh, near Bruneck in the northern region South Tirol, Italy, on early Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Croatia exit poll: Leftist candidate leads presidential race

By DARKO BANDIC

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) —

An exit poll on Sunday in Croatia's fiercely contested presidential election suggested that a leftist challenger is set to win the race over the incumbent conservative.

The exit poll carried by public broadcaster HRT and conducted by the IPSOS polling agency says Zoran Milanovic won 53% of votes while Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic garnered nearly 47%.

The official vote count appeared to confirm Milanovic's victory.

With about 50% of the vote counted, Milanovic had 54% while Grabar Kitarovic has 46%, according to state TV.

If confirmed in the official vote tally, the result would mean a blow for the ruling conservatives while Croatia holds the European Union's rotating presidency, and before a parliamentary election later this year.

Milanovic's team and supporters at his election headquarters were jubilant after the exit poll tally was published. Milanovic him-



Zoran Milanovic, the liberal opposition candidate, right, waves after voting with his spouse Sanja Music Milanovic at a polling station in Zagreb, Croatia, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

self thanked his supporters and campaign volunteers, stopping short of declaring victory.

"Thanks to all the volunteers, all of you who supported me during the past six months," Milanovic wrote on Facebook. "People, thank you!"

Grabar Kitarovic's associates said they will wait for the official results, but admitted that the gap between the two candidates as shown in the exit poll suggested major changes can't be expected.

Croatia assumed the EU's presidency on Jan. 1 for

the first time since joining the bloc in 2013. This means that the EU's newest member state will be tasked for six months with overseeing Britain's divorce from the bloc on Jan. 31 and the start of post-Brexit talks.

If officially confirmed, Milanovic's win would be a rare

victory for a left-wing official to a major post in central Europe where populists and conservatives have been winning elections in recent years.

Sunday's presidential runoff was expected to be a very tight, unpredictable vote. Grabar Kitarovic and Milanovic made it into the runoff after the first round of voting on Dec. 22.

Milanovic won slightly more votes than Grabar Kitarovic in the first round. There are 3.8 million voters in Croatia, a country of 4.2 million that is also a member of NATO.

The two candidates represent the two main political options in Croatia. Grabar Kitarovic is backed by the governing, conservative Croatian Democratic Union, a dominating political force since the country split from the former Yugoslavia in 1991, while Milanovic enjoys support from the leftist Social Democrats and their liberal allies.

Even though Croatia's presidency is largely ceremonial, Sunday's election is an important test before a parliamentary election expected later this year. □

Austria's Greens clear final hurdle for government with Kurz

By FRANK JORDANS

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Members of Austria's Green party voted Saturday to join a new government led by conservative former Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, clearing the final hurdle for a previously untested left-right alliance at the national level.

A clear 93% majority of Green delegates backed the coalition pact that was already approved by their party leadership and Kurz's Austrian People's Party earlier this week. Out of 264 delegates, 246 voted in favor of the pact with only 15 voting against or abstaining.

Werner Kogler, the leader of the Greens, had urged delegates to put aside concerns about entering into a coalition with Kurz's conservatives and recognize

the opportunity to achieve progress on issues such as cutting child poverty, increasing government transparency and combating climate change. He noted that months of negotiations with the People's Party had already produced a plan for a 2021 tax reform that emphasizes environmental protection.

"Big, fat, stinking diesel SUVs are going to get more expensive," Kogler told the party meeting in Salzburg, citing the current wildfires in distant Australia as an example of natural disasters already being fueled by climate change.

The Greens want Austria to become carbon-neutral in 2040, a decade earlier than the European Union's target.

The party made strong gains in September's na-

tional election on the back of mounting voter concern about climate change. It took almost 14% of the vote, coming fourth behind the far-right Freedom Party, the center-left Social Democrats and Kurz's party, which alone received more than 37% of the vote. The election became necessary after the collapse of Kurz's previous coalition government with the Freedom Party following the release of a video showing the far right's then-leader, Heinz-Christian Strache, offering favors to a purported Russian investor.

The Austrian coalition is being closely watched as a possible template for a future government in neighboring Germany, where the Green party has also been riding high in recent polls. □

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Death toll surges as Cambodian building collapse search ends

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — The death toll from the collapse of a building under construction in Cambodia has surged to 36, even as an additional survivor was pulled from the rubble, officials said Sunday.

At least a dozen bodies were found in overnight operations at the site in the coastal province of Kep, where the building toppled on Friday.

Prime Minister Hun Sen announced the end of the rescue operation, confirming that 23 injured survivors were found.

A statement from Kep provincial authorities said that at least 13 women and six

children were among the dead.

Women are often employed as construction workers in Cambodia and neighboring Thailand, and families of workers also often live at the construction sites.

At a news conference at the site, Hun Sen said the couple who owned the building and hired the construction crew had been detained and sent to court to face charges. He did not specify the charges. A committee was being set up to determine the cause of the collapse.

Hun Sen said that according to preliminary findings, the building collapsed be-

cause the construction work failed to adhere to safety standards.

He said that plywood that is normally put underneath the concrete separating each floor is supposed to remain in place for about one month to allow proper setting, but instead was removed after roughly 10 days. He also indicated that the rebar — the steel rods assembled in a mesh to reinforce the concrete — were not of a strong enough gauge.

A senior provincial police officer had said Friday that the accident occurred after concrete had been poured on the top level of the building. □



Photo provided by the Kep Province Authority Police, emergency workers carry a survivor from the debris after a building collapsed in Kep province, Cambodia, Friday, Jan. 3, 2020. Associated Press

Local authorities: Mysterious illness in China is not SARS

By YANAN WANG BEIJING (AP) — The mysterious respiratory illness that has infected dozens of people in a central Chinese city is not SARS, local authorities said Sunday.

The 2002-2003 SARS epidemic started in southern China and killed more than 700 people in mainland China, Hong Kong and elsewhere. Fears of a SARS recurrence arose this month after a slate of patients were hospitalized with an unexplained viral pneumonia in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province.

As of Sunday, 59 people

were diagnosed with the condition and have been isolated while they receive treatment, according to the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission. Seven were in critical condition, while the rest were stable.

The commission said in a statement that initial investigations have ruled out SARS — severe acute respiratory syndrome — as well as Middle East respiratory syndrome, influenza, bird flu and adenovirus.

The commission previously said the condition's most common symptom was fever, with shortness of breath

and lung infections appearing in a "small number" of cases. There were no clear indications of human-to-human transmission.

Several patients were working at the South China Seafood City food market in sprawling Wuhan's suburbs. The commission said the market would be suspended and investigated.

Hong Kong's Hospital Authority said Sunday that a total of 15 patients in Hong Kong were being treated for symptoms including fever and respiratory infection after recent visits to Wuhan. □



Health surveillance officers use temperature scanner to monitor passengers arriving at the Hong Kong International airport in Hong Kong, Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020. Associated Press

Guaidó blocked from Venezuela's congress as impasse deepens

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó was violently blocked Sunday from presiding over a special session of congress where rivals tried to install a substitute in what was condemned as a hijacking of the country's last democratic institution.

As a scuffle broke out with security forces in riot gear, the U.S.-backed leader tried unsuccessfully to mount an iron fence surrounding the neo-classical palace where the opposition-controlled National Assembly was set to elect its leader for the final year of its 2015-2020 period.

Inside, the situation was similarly rowdy, as a rival slate headed by lawmaker Luis Parra tried to swear themselves in as legislative leaders with the support of socialist deputies loyal to President Nicolás Maduro.

Lacking quorum, there was no vote for Parra, the opposition said. Guaidó's allies, who despite some defections still enjoy a comfortable majority in the 167-seat assembly, immediately denounced the impromptu session as invalid. "This is nothing more than another blow to our constitution," said Guaidó, whose blue suit was ripped during the chaotic fistcuffs.

Still, state TV — a mouthpiece for Maduro — celebrated the initiative, raising the possibility of rival claims to the legislature's leadership in the days ahead, just as Guaidó a year ago asserted that he was Venezuela's interim president following Maduro's 2018 re-election following a campaign marred by irregularities.

Guaidó said lawmakers would gather later Sunday at the headquarters of El



Pro-government lawmakers hold up their fists and shout that Chavez lives, referring to late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, as the session to elect new leadership is delayed due to some opposition lawmakers being blocked from entering the National Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Nacional — the country's last major opposition newspaper.

Guaidó faced a major test in uniting the opposition and articulating a new vision Sunday in his year-long campaign to remove Maduro. But his re-election for a second straight year as head of congress — the source of his legitimacy in the eyes of more than 50 countries that recognize him as Venezuela's rightful leader — had been widely expected.

The weeks leading up to Sunday's vote were marked by tension, with the opposition denouncing a covert government campaign to intimidate and bribe lawmakers into voting against Guaidó.

Parra is one of a small handful of lawmakers who recently broke with Guaidó and have since been expelled from their parties for alleged involvement in a corruption scandal involv-

ing allies of Maduro.

On Sunday, police officers wearing anti-riot helmets and flanked by metal barricades initially blocked several lawmakers and pro-opposition journalists from reaching the legislature in downtown Caracas.

Amid bouts of shoving and political sloganeering, security forces demanded that each lawmaker present their credentials, arguing they were under orders to deny entry to several lawmakers banned from carrying out their duties by the loyalist supreme court. "Is your family in Venezuela?" Guaidó asked the young police officers, who stood firmly in nervous silence.

"Today you're complicit with the dictatorship, you're complicit with those who are responsible for the hunger inside Venezuela," he added. He was eventually allowed though the police line, but was then blocked

from entering the legislature.

Support for Guaidó inside the opposition has taken a hit after several minority parties in November splintered off to create a separate bloc to negotiate directly with Maduro — something that Guaidó has refused, arguing that talks are simply a time-buying exercise aimed at keeping Maduro in power.

The small group of opposition lawmakers who broke with Guaidó argue that in stubbornly sticking to his plan of removing Maduro, he has put his political ambitions above the needs of Venezuelans who have largely tuned out from the political fight while enduring an economy in shambles and under stiff U.S. sanctions.

"In 2019 you represented the hopes of the nation, but today you're its biggest deception," said José Brito, one of the lawmakers who

turned against Guaidó amid accusations they used their position to enrich themselves and do the bidding of Maduro.

Guaidó faces a bigger challenge articulating a fresh vision for removing Maduro.

"The big question for this year is whether Guaidó will be able to use his waning political strength to guide his coalition through such a rocky period," said Geoff Ramsey, a researcher at the Washington Office on Latin America. "Opposition unity is already fraying at the edges, and the armed forces appear less likely than ever to abandon Maduro."

Guaidó declared presidential powers over Venezuela on Jan. 23, 2019, saying Maduro's reelection was illegitimate because the most popular opposition parties and political leaders had been disqualified from running.

Venezuela sits atop vast oil and mineral resources, but it has been imploding economically and socially in recent years. Critics blame the plunge on years of failed socialist rule and corruption, while Maduro's allies say U.S. sanctions are taking a toll on the economy. The South American nation's 30 million people suffer soaring inflation and shortages of gasoline, running water and electricity, among basic services.

An estimated 4.5 million Venezuelans have abandoned their nation in an exodus rivaling war-torn Syria. Maduro, who took over after the 2013 death of former President Hugo Chávez, says Guaidó is a puppet of the United States. Maduro also says he's determined to win control of the National Assembly in elections later this year. □

Bolivia set to hold May 3 vote for new president, congress

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — An official for Bolivia's new election court said Friday a new government will be chosen in elections set for May 3 to replace ousted

President Evo Morales and the interim administration that followed. Court Vice President Óscar Hassenteufel said the full electoral calendar will be revealed

on Monday. The elections will choose a president, vice president and members of Congress and the Senate. If nobody wins on a first round, a second round

would be held. Morales resigned in November after a wave of protests fed by accusations his backers had rigged an Oct. 20 election. A conservative interim gov-

ernment led by Jeanine Áñez then assumed power. Morales' Movement Toward Socialism party is the country's largest current political faction. □

LOCAL



Appearing in January at the Holiday Inn resort: Aruba Ray's Comedy Club



PALM BEACH — The “Aruba Ray’s Comedy” show features some of the funniest American standup comedians in a terrific 90-minute show, now located in the renovated ballroom at the Holiday Inn Resort. This is the #1 rated night time activity and #1 rated show on TripAdvisor. Five nights a week for already six years this successful show is opening its doors on Aruba. Don’t miss it!

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- Christine Hurley from “Last comic standing”
- Ray Ellin from “This week at the comedy cellar” on Comedy Central

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gested - - and are less expensive - - at www.ArubaComedy.com. This is the same caliber show you would find at the top comedy clubs in NYC. The comedians are truly some of the best from the United States. This wonderful show is a great way to spend a night out.

Ray Ellin hosts and produces the shows. Considered by his peers to be the best host in NYC, Ray is known as “Aruba Ray” because of his passion for Aruba. Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past seven years, and produces and hosts these incredible comedy shows on the island. He is a popular comedian in New York, and has brought his talent and colleagues to Aruba.



Ray has appeared on many television programs; he has hosted the popular talk show Late Net, and hosted the television shows The Movie Loft, Brain Fuel, and New York Now. He also produced and directed the very successful film The Latin Legends of Comedy, distributed by 20th Century Fox.

Ray is an executive producer and co-star on the television show This Week at the Cellar, on Comedy Central.

“I’m very excited to do the show in January” said Ellin. “This is an excellent lineup. And it’s cold in New York!”

The shows are at 8:30pm, five nights a week, from January 9th to February 13th, in the ballroom at the Holiday Inn Resort. Doors open at 8pm. It is suggested to arrive early - seating is first come first serve. To save money, it is suggested you purchase tickets in advance at www.ArubaComedy.com. You can also purchase tickets (subject to availability!) at the showroom door at 7:30pm. Anyone can attend, however the show is suggested for a mature audience. You can now also purchase dinner and a show, online, at www.ArubaComedy.com. Enjoy dinner at 6:30pm, before the show begins!

Ask your concierge for assistance, or call Holiday Inn at +297 586-3600 or call Aruba Ray’s Comedy Club at +297 749-4363. □



Plastic ban: the law has passed



ORANJESTAD —The island's government made a decision in 2017 to ban all single use plastic bags and has now extended it to include items as plastic cups and straws and Styrofoam boxes, such as disposable coolers. Also, sunscreens containing oxybenzone is to be prohibited in Aruba. The ban is effective in 2019, with a one-year transition period to a total ban in 2020. The Plastic Ban Ordinance will go into effect as of July 1st 2020, together with the list of products that are prohibited.

The ordinance:

The government of Aruba together with Entities of the private sector of Aruba Endorsement Considering:

- The increased environmental challenges the world is facing as well as Aruba;
- The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), especially SDG's 12,13,14 and 15, focused on the importance of responsible consumption, safeguarding of oceans and terrestrials areas as well as climate action;
- The importance of the protection of Aruba's coral reefs and marine life, greatly under pressure due to increased human activity;
- The importance of sustainable business practices in order to safeguard Aruba's economy, environment and the well-being of its citizens;
- The leadership role the private sector of Aruba has taken regarding the sector's contribution towards combating plastic pollution and the degradation of Aruba's natural resources;
- The importance of cross-sector collaboration for solving societal and environmental matters;
- The government's ambition to fortify and instill a sense of pride, love and ownership within all individuals that live or visit Aruba and to further evoke the realization that there is only one Aruba

Decide:

To endorse the law banning the use of single use plastics and Oxybenzone (Landsverordening verbod op voor het milieu schadelijke producten) and to stimulate constructive and continuous dialogue as well as awareness regarding sustainable business practices.

GOA & Private Sector endorsement

This endorsement does not, nor is it intended to, create any binding, legal obligations under domestic or international law Signed in Aruba on 27 November 2019.

What type of products are prohibited?

- Single use plastic bags with any type of handle;
- Single use plastic bags in supermarkets to pack fruit and vegetables;
- Single use plastic cutlery;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam cups; Single use plastic stirrers; Single use plastic straws;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam plates;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam containers used for immediate consumption like fast food containers;
- Suntan lotion/cream with Oxybenzone;
- Biodegradable products not mentioned in the list of exempted products.

What type of single use products exempt until further notice?

- Single use plastic straw for medical use;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam recipient for cold cuts and raw meats;
- Saran wrap; Plastic lids (non plastic/styrofoam/biodegradable) on allowed containers/cups; Plastic food packages used for prepackaging products by local food manufactures for whole sale, their products fall under the exemption in 'deel A & B - indicated as "drankverpakkingen, borden en zakjes en wikkels die voedingsmiddelen bevatten";

What is the scope of the prohibition?

- Import of the prohibited products;
- Manufacturing of the prohibited products;
- Sale of the prohibited products;
- To offer of the prohibited products;

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Lola: hipster Mexican Spot & a Happy Surprise



PALM BEACH — Mexican food is hotter than ever and Lola is a real-deal taqueria. In the hipster corner of the high rise strip where popular sister bar Craft already proved to be it, Lola adds a colorful, tasty, happy flavor. The menu presents off-the-chart delicious tacos & more that gives you real bang for the buck.

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Research highlights risks of over-tourism and climate change in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Recently, the Central Bank of Aruba carried out a study on the challenges of over-tourism and climate change in small island tourism economies. It focused on small island tourism economies in the Caribbean and, in particular, Aruba. Based on a historical analysis of economic, social, and environmental developments, the study provides an in-depth picture of the complex and

dynamic challenges of over-tourism and climate change in a small mature island tourism economy.

Over-tourism is a recent phenomenon that describes the uncontrolled growth of tourism beyond a level of socioecological saturation, the so-called 'tipping point'. It is a negative consequence of the significant growth in tourist intensity (number of tour-

ists per citizen) and tourist density (number of tourists per km²), manifesting itself through increased economic vulnerabilities, growing social burdens, and the degradation of the environment and fragile ecosystems. This often causes a further deterioration of visitor experiences and tourism income. Climate change can intensify and worsen the adverse effects of over-tourism, espe-



cially in small island tourism economies where tourism is concentrated in coastal areas.

The results of the study indicate that Aruba is one of the most tourism intense and tourism dense small island economies in the Caribbean. Annually, the island attracts, on average, 17 visitors per capita and more than 10,000 visitors per km² with over 800 rooms per km² of coastline. The increasing pressures and risks of over-tourism are associated with rising social costs of deteriorating labor participation, stagnant productivity, higher public expenditures, and rising income inequality, as well as loss of nature reserves, coastal erosion, and environmental degradation. These adverse effects are also exacerbated by increasing effects of storm surges, floods, and rising seawater temperatures. It is estimated that at least 46 percent of households are at significant and increasing risk of climate change. The results suggest that over-tourism has both direct and indirect effects in small island tourism economies. While the direct economic benefits of tourism are achieved in the short to medium term, the socio-ecological costs and effects of over-tourism are

experienced in the long term with negative consequences for generations thereafter.

The study concludes that structural reforms and transformation are urgently called for to mitigate the accelerating costs of over-tourism and risks of climate change. The symbiosis of over-tourism and climate change poses substantial risks to sustainable economic development. To mitigate these risks, significant innovation and investments are required in both national policies and the execution thereof. These include strategic and comprehensive policy reforms to strengthen macroeconomic resilience against economic shocks and negative impacts of climate change. Moreover, it is of the utmost importance to strengthen the institutional capabilities and governance for sustainable and inclusive tourism. While small island-based tourism economies may not be able to control the climate, policy makers have control over – and are responsible for – steering these vulnerable economies towards a more sustainable future.

The complete publication is available on the CBA's website (www.cbaruba.org). □

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Hotel

Hustle

Column by: Shanella Pantophlet

Check out times

ORANJESTAD — If there is one aspect I feel that nobody seems to respect in the hospitality industry is the checkout times. This can be especially difficult or troubling in a timeshare resort, where we can't just reassign people. Over the last few weeks we've found ourselves with lists of rooms who are still in their rooms past check out time. Even the threat of a late check out fee tends to not deter some people from breaking the rules.



Considering the size of our suites and other similarly sized resorts who deal with timeshare clientele, our check out times are not an arbitrary thing to make your life difficult. Usually these check in and check out times are just enough for housekeepers to go in and give the rooms a thorough clean and restock for the next member. The weeks that fall in with holidays tend to be the most difficult as guests staying these weeks tend to be here for two week or more, so Saturdays become a heavier than usual cleaning day once those rooms need to be turned around.

We in reservations do our best to provide housekeeping with as much information on arrival times and dates so they can schedule their check out day as effectively as possible. If one housekeeper has a section that only needs the basic services because they'll be staying on, it frees them up to give others who may have five checkouts on that same Saturday a hand in getting their rooms finished by the guaranteed check in time.

Getting rooms back in service by the time we guarantee is only made more difficult by those who refuse to leave because; they have a later flight, had too many drinks the night before and can't wake up or feel they should be allowed to stay in until the housekeeper is at the door. Behind the scenes of all of this, there are various calls between departments to determine course of action. Usually the front office and housekeeping managers will reach out to the guest to ask for their cooperation.

Usually they get an answer that someone approved them a late check out, which we all know is not true, because nobody wants that kind of heat on them on a Saturday morning. All the more evidence by the fact that usually the guest won't give up the name of the person who supposedly allowed this late check out.

After they're informed that we checked with all appropriate departments about this and have no records of them being approved a late check out, we give them another oppor-

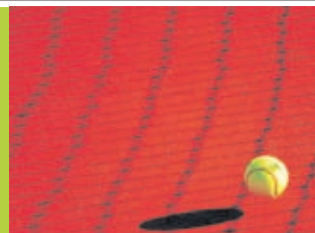
tunity to cooperate, before extreme measures are taken. If the guest refuses to leave they're made aware of the late check out charge and informed that security will be sent to remove them. Removing someone is not a pleasant experience either for the security staff or the guest themselves, but we have work that needs to get done so someone else can start their vacation.

We aren't trying to go to the nuclear option and we really don't want things to escalate that far. Whenever possible we try to be flexible, but at the end of the day while you're refusing to leave and causing all this drama it pushes our schedule off track. Once the schedule is off and that room gets delivered late, then not only have we had to deal with one issue, but now we have the guest checking in that will be upset that they haven't received their room on time. It becomes a domino effect of negativity. So please next time you ask for a late check out and are rejected, know that we aren't saying "no" just for the sake of it, but we are looking at the forecast for the day. □



Aruban born and bred Shanella Pantophlet is passionate about tourism. That is the world she studied and works in, so we might as well call her a specialist. Luckily for Aruba Today Shanella also loves to write. And together with the fact that the majority of our readers are tourists, we found ourselves a perfect combination for a column: Hotel Hustle.

SPORTS



Russia's Karen Khachanov celebrates winning over Taylor Fritz of the United States in their match at the ATP Cup in Perth, Australia, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

Russia beats U.S., Aussies sweep Canada at ATP Cup

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — Daniil Medvedev beat John Isner 6-3, 6-1 to give Russia two wins from two starts at the ATP Cup, leaving the U.S. as the only winless team so far in Group D. Russia followed its 3-0 opening win over Italy with another comfortable victory in Perth on Sunday, clinching the match against the Americans before the US pairing of Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram salvaged some pride with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Karen Khachanov and Medvedev. Khachanov gave the Russians a winning start with his 3-6, 7-5, 6-1 comeback victory over Taylor Fritz in the first singles.

Continued on Page 23



REPEAT DEFEAT

Seahawks stifles the Eagles in a Wild Card playoff

Seattle Seahawks' Jarran Reed (90) celebrates with Quinton Jefferson (99) after Philadelphia Eagles' Josh McCown was sacked during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press
Page 20

Eller's goal completes Capitals' stunning OT win over Sharks

By IAN QUILLEN

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Capitals never believe they're out of a game. On Sunday, they showed why.

Lars Eller scored with 2:59 remaining in overtime after the Capitals rallied from two goals down in the final minute of regulation, completing a stunning 5-4 victory over the San Jose Sharks. T.J. Oshie tied the game with 15 seconds left. Eller also assisted Jakub Vrana's second goal of the game with 47 seconds remaining as the NHL-leading Capitals became just the seventh team in league history to win after trailing by two inside the final minute.

"We just keep working," Oshie said. "We've got everyone tugging the rope. And when you have that, it's fun."

Evander Kane had his third career hat trick for San Jose, which never trailed before Eller's game-winner. "That's why they lead the league and that's why they have the most points," said Sharks coach Bob Boughner, "because they find ways to win games. As disappointed as I am, I'm pretty content in how our 5-on-5 game looks."

Logan Couture scored an empty-netter with a minute remaining, appearing to seal the game. But Capitals coach Todd Reirden left the net empty, and Washington responded with its sixth and seventh goals of the season when playing in 6-on-5 situations.

"We have a plan," Reirden said of those late-game successes. "We believe in those players. They are players that are not fazed by pressure. They're anxious to get out there and try to be the guys that tie up the game."

Nic Dowd had a second-period goal for Washington. Braden Holtby made 25 saves to snap a three-game losing streak in net and picked up an assist on Eller's decisive goal, pushing the puck up ice to John Carlson.

From there, Carlson sent a cross-ice pass to Eller, who rifled his shot beyond Mar-

tin Jones and inside the right post.

"That was one of the wildest games I've played," Eller said.

Jones stopped 24 shots, Couture also had an assist and Timo Meier had two, but San Jose was still swept by Washington in the season series in unlikely fashion. Kane's three goals — all in the second period — gave him a team-leading 18 for the Sharks, who fell to 2-2 on their last five-game trip of the season.

Couture's insurance tally looked like it would be enough for victory. But Vrana answered only 13 seconds later, assisted by Eller and Radko Gudas. Then Oshie leveled the game from in close on Evgeny Kuznetsov's feed.

"We were the better team I thought for most of the game," Kane said. "We've got to look at the positives. It's easy to look at the negatives."

NOTES: Kane scored all three goals in one period — the first — in his other hat trick this season, which came in a 5-2 win over the Carolina Panthers on Oct. 16. ... Sunday marked the 10-year anniversary of Alex Ovechkin being named Washington's captain. He's the second-longest-tenured captain in team history behind Rod Langway (Oct. 5, 1982 to Feb. 9, 1993.) ... Ovechkin saw his points streak end at five games. ... San Jose's Barclay Goodrow had an apparent opening goal disallowed 1:14 into the second



Washington Capitals center Lars Eller (20), of Denmark, celebrates his winning goal in overtime of an NHL hockey game with defenseman John Carlson (74) as San Jose Sharks right wing Kevin Labanc (62) skates away Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

period. He was ruled to have touched the puck with a high stick. UP NEXT

Sharks: Finish their trip at St. Louis on Tuesday. Capitals: Host Ottawa on Tuesday. □

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Russell Wilson leads Seahawks past Eagles 17-9

By **ROB MAADDI**

AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — After Jadeveon Clowney knocked out Carson Wentz, Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks knocked off the Philadelphia Eagles. Wilson threw a 53-yard touchdown pass to DK Metcalf, Marshawn Lynch had a rushing score and the Seahawks beat the Eagles 17-9 in the wild-card round of the NFC playoffs on Sunday night.

"To come back here, back East, it's a long ways, we were able to do it, pull through," Wilson said. "We've been road warriors and it's exciting. We've got a great defense, too."

Making his first career play-

off start, Wentz lasted two series before exiting with a head injury following a helmet-to-helmet hit from Clowney.

Nick Foles wasn't around to rescue Philadelphia this time.

Forty-year-old Josh McCown stepped in, becoming the oldest quarterback to make his playoff debut. But he couldn't lead the Eagles (9-8) into the end zone. The Seahawks (12-5) lost three of their final four games, including a 26-21 defeat at home against San Francisco in Week 17 that cost them the NFC West title.

But they traveled to Philadelphia for the second time in six weeks and be-



Seattle Seahawks' Russell Wilson (3) rushes past Philadelphia Eagles' Nigel Bradham (53) during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

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came the third team to win on the road this weekend, improving to 8-1 away from home this season.

Wilson threw for 325 yards and led the team with 45 yards rushing. Metcalf had seven catches for 160 yards. The Seahawks had a season-high seven sacks from six players.

"You've got to step it up in the playoffs," Clowney said. "We knew it was going to be an upfront game, the whole game.

They've got a great offensive line, great veteran players."

Wilson drove Seattle 82 yards late in the second quarter and Lynch powered in from the 5 for a 10-0 lead.

Wilson connected with Metcalf for 26 yards and David Moore for 38 on third-down, catch-and-run passes to keep that drive going.

McCown finally got the offense going on the opening drive of the third quarter. He connected with Zach Ertz for 32 yards and Boston Scott ran 15 yards to the 5. But a false start, fumbled snap and sack followed. Jake Elliott's 26-yard field goal cut the deficit to 10-6. The Seahawks answered quickly. Metcalf stretched to catch Wilson's deep pass, got up and tumbled into the end zone for a 17-6

lead.

"I caught the ball, I didn't feel anybody touch me," Metcalf said. "I got back up and I wanted a touchdown. I wanted a touchdown, real bad."

Down 17-9, Eagles coach Doug Pederson passed up a 42-yard field goal attempt with 6:24 left and went for fourth-and-4 from the Seahawks 24. Miles Sanders couldn't catch McCown's pass.

Philadelphia had another chance after Shelton Gibson, just signed earlier in the week, drew a 39-yard pass interference penalty to the Seahawks 13.

On fourth-and-7 from the 10 with two minutes left, Clowney sacked McCown.

Wentz was forced to watch from the sideline following knee surgery when Foles led the Eagles to the franchise's first Super Bowl title two years ago. He was out with a back injury last year when Foles led Philadelphia to a wild-card win in Chicago.

The Eagles were decimated by injuries throughout the season and had to rely on five offensive players off the practice squad during a four-game winning streak that sealed the NFC East title.

Wentz started all 16 games for the second time in his four seasons and played his

best down the stretch with backups surrounding him. But he finished the season injured the same as the previous two.

Seattle had plenty of injuries, too. The Seahawks lost running backs Chris Carson, Rashaad Penny and C.J. Prosise, forcing them to sign Lynch.

But Seattle has Wilson — and he has the Seahawks heading to Green Bay to face Aaron Rodgers and the Packers in the divisional round.

"We're anticipating some snow," Wilson said with a smile. "They obviously have Aaron, they have a lot of great players, they have a great defensive line."

DEJA VU

The Seahawks also beat the Eagles 17-9 on Nov. 24.

INJURIES

Seahawks: Defensive tackle Ziggy Ansah left with a neck injury.

Eagles: Wentz stayed in the game after the shot from Clowney, threw two passes and left for the locker room late in the first quarter. ... Defensive end Brandon Graham left with a knee injury.

NEXT UP

Seahawks: Will go to Green Bay to face the Packers (13-3) in the divisional round next Sunday.

Eagles: Start the offseason. □

Cousins, Vikings upend Saints 26-20 in OT in NFC playoffs

By **BRETT MARTEL**

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — After tight end Kyle Rudolph emerged from a purple swarm of celebrating Vikings near the corner of the end zone, he took an opportunity to mock those who doubted quarterback Kirk Cousins' ability to come through in the clutch.

"I'm just glad Kirk can't win big games, apparently," Rudolph said. "We proved that one wrong today." Cousins hit Rudolph with a 4-yard fade on third-and-goal in overtime, and the Minnesota Vikings pulled out a 26-20 victory over the favored Saints in the wild-card round of the NFC playoffs on Sunday.

Cousins lost his only previous playoff start in 2015 with Washington, came up short of a playoff berth on the final regular-season game a year ago and struggled in a handful of other high-profile regular-season night games.

Yet Cousins eschewed an opportunity to gloat after his pass to Rudolph — and a 43-yarder to Adam Thielen at the Saints 2-yard line three plays earlier — helped the Vikings (11-6) advance to play top seed San Francisco in the divisional round of the playoffs on Saturday.

"I'm just happy we won," Cousins said. "It was a great, great game, two good football teams."

Saints fans begged to differ after seeing New Orleans' season end in overtime in the Superdome for a second straight year.

The latest disappointing end for the Saints (13-4) came nearly a year after New Orleans lost in the NFC championship game to the Los Angeles Rams in a game marred by missed Rams penalties late in regulation. This time, replays on video boards showed a possible push-off by Rudolph against defensive back P.J. Williams moments before he jumped to snag the winning catch.

NFL president of officiating Al Riveron said the league reviewed numerous replay angles, and while they saw contact by both players,



Minnesota Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph (82) pulls in the game winning touchdown pass over New Orleans Saints cornerback P.J. Williams (26) during overtime of an NFL wild-card playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in New Orleans. The Vikings won 26-20.

Associated Press

"none of that contact rises to the level of a foul."

Saints coach Sean Payton said the Vikings "deserved to win."

Dalvin Cook gained 130 yards from scrimmage and scored two touchdowns after missing the last two regular-season games with a shoulder injury. Cousins finished with 242 yards and one TD passing.

"Being a fourth-round pick and kind of working your way up in the league — now you win a playoff game. Guess what? You look around and you realize there's more mountains to climb," Cousins said. "You just keep chasing the next mountain and there will always be people who are going to criticize you — and that's OK."

New Orleans trailed by 10 at the start of the fourth quarter but forced overtime with Drew Brees' 20-yard touchdown pass to Taysom Hill and Wil Lutz's 49-yard field goal with 2 seconds left.

"They made more plays than we did," Payton said. "They ran the ball better than we did."

Hill was the Saints' leading

rusher with 50 yards and Alvin Kamara was held to 21 yards rushing on seven carries.

"Both defenses played well," Payton added. "Shoot, here you are in overtime and they made a few plays right there at the end that obviously were significant."

PURPLE PRESSURE

Minnesota's defense forced Brees into two turnovers — one game after the Saints had finished the regular season with an NFL record-low eight. Brees also was sacked three times and finished 26 of 33 for 208 yards, one TD and an interception.

Brees' first turnover came on a deep throw downfield for Ted Ginn Jr. late in the first half. Safety Anthony Harris corralled the ball as he fell to the turf and then returned it 30 yards across midfield. That led to Cook's first touchdown on a 5-yard run that gave the Vikings a 13-10 lead.

The Saints were threatening with less than five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter when Danielle Hunter sacked Brees, who lost the ball. It was recovered by defensive tackle

Jalyn Holmes on the Minnesota 36.

Brees said the fumble began with a "miscommunication" with a receiver, whom he didn't name.

"The ball should have been out of my hands and all of a sudden that wasn't the route that was run, so now I'm just trying to throw the ball into the dirt to avoid a sack," Brees said. "Right as my hand's going back (Hunter) just kind of gets a piece of my arm and that ball comes out. So I'm really disappointed in that. That never should have happened."

Saints safety Vonn Bell, back from a knee injury that sidelined him three games, helped set up the opening scoring chance of the game when he recovered Thielen's fumble. But Everson Griffen's sack of Brees on third-and-goal limited Minnesota's damage to a field goal.

HILL'S HIGHLIGHTS

Hill, the Saints' do-it-all reserve QB, was instrumental in the first touchdown drive of the game. He rushed for a first down before completing a 50-yard pass to rookie Deonte Harris and

then, while lined up as a tight end, delivered a block that helped Kamara score on a 4-yard run around the right end to make it 10-3.

MISSED CHANCES

Harris' 54-yard kickoff return and Brees' 20-yard pass to Michael Thomas in the final seconds of the first half gave New Orleans a chance to tie it, but Lutz's 43-yard field-goal attempt went wide right.

In the third quarter, Hill's apparent first-down run on a fake punt was nullified by tight end Josh Hill's false start.

Brees also lamented a false start penalty that triggered a 10-second runoff shortly before Lutz's game-tying kick at the end of regulation. If not for the penalty, the Saints would have had a second-and-10 from the Minnesota 26 with 21 seconds left. Instead, the ball went back 5 yards and there were 11 seconds remaining.

"That was costly," Brees said, noting that without the penalty, the Saints might have taken a couple of more shots at the end zone for a late go-ahead score.

INJURIES

Vikings: Tight end Tyler Conklin was carted from the sideline to the locker room in the first half. ... Right tackle Brian O'Neill walked off with an apparent leg injury in the third quarter but returned.

Saints: Linebacker Kiko Alonso limped off the field with what the Saints said was a knee injury in the second quarter and did not return. ... Left guard Andrus Peat limped to the sideline with an apparent right leg injury in the fourth quarter but returned.

NEXT UP

Vikings: Prepare for next weekend's trip to San Francisco to face a 49ers team that, like the Saints, went 13-3 in the regular season.

Saints: Head into the off-season with contract work ahead on key personnel, including Brees, who turns 41 on Jan. 15, and Kamara, who could opt to hold out for an extension as he enters the final season of his rookie deal. □

Dallas Cowboys finally move on from Jason Garrett as coach

By **SCHUYLER DIXON**
AP Pro Football Writer

FRISCO, Texas (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys made official Sunday night what they had already signaled: Jason Garrett is out as coach. Garrett was informed he wouldn't be back for a 10th full season on the same day the Cowboys finished an interview with former Green Bay coach Mike McCarthy, who won a Super Bowl with the Packers on Dallas' home field nine years ago. Owner/general manager Jerry Jones decided not to renew Garrett's expiring contract because Super Bowl-winning quarterback Troy Aikman's former backup couldn't get the Cowboys back to football's biggest stage, an absence that's approaching a quarter-century. At 9½ seasons, the 53-year-old Garrett had the club's second-longest tenure behind Pro Football Hall of Famer Tom Landry, who coached the Cowboys for the franchise's first 29 years before Jones fired him when he bought the team in 1989. Dallas finished 8-8 for the fourth time under Garrett. The Cowboys fueled high



Dallas Cowboys head coach Jason Garrett, center left, walks off the field after of an NFL football game against the Philadelphia Eagles, Sunday, Dec. 22, 2019, in Philadelphia

preseason expectations with a 3-0 start before dropping eight of 12 and losing control of their playoff fate. Dallas missed the playoffs six times in Garrett's nine full seasons. The inevitable conclusion was a difficult one for Jones, who hired Garrett as offensive coordinator in 2007 even before choosing Wade Phillips as coach. Garrett got the interim job when Phillips was fired halfway through the 2010 season. Garrett's record is 87-70, playoffs included. "We are extremely grateful to Jason Garrett for his

more than 20 years of service to the Dallas Cowboys as a player, assistant coach and head coach," Jones said in a statement released by the team that ended a week of speculation on the future of Garrett, who continued showing up at team headquarters after the season ended. "His level of commitment, character and dedication to this organization has been outstanding at every stage of his career." With Garrett's status unresolved publicly, the Cowboys interviewed McCarthy and former Cincinnati coach Marvin Lewis over

the weekend. McCarthy reached the playoffs nine times in 13 seasons with the Packers, reaching the NFC championship game four times. Green Bay won at least 10 games eight times in his first 11 seasons before going 7-9 in 2017. McCarthy was fired with the Packers at 4-7-1 last season. The biggest knock on Lewis was his 0-7 playoff record with the Bengals. He had a 131-122-3 record in the regular season and was fired after a third straight losing season in 2018. Dallas hasn't been past the divisional round of the playoffs in 24 straight seasons since the club's fifth Super Bowl title to finish the 1995 season. Garrett got them within a victory of the NFC championship game three times in five years, losing to Green Bay twice and then the Los Angeles Rams last season. When training camp opened, Jones didn't want to talk about what it would take for Garrett to get another contract. It had been five years since Garrett was coaching for his job and the Cowboys went 12-4 and won a wild-card game

before a loss at the Packers that included the infamous catch that wasn't by Dez Bryant. Jones had high hopes with quarterback Dak Prescott going into his fourth season along with star running back Ezekiel Elliott, who got a \$90 million extension the morning of the first practice of the regular season after holding out the entire pre-season. With Dallas at 3-0, video emerged of Jones mingling with fans in the French Quarter the night before a game in New Orleans. Dallas lost 12-10 to start the first of two three-game losing streaks. The Cowboys have never made the playoffs when losing at least three straight games twice in a season, although they had a chance to qualify with a win at Philadelphia in Week 16. Dallas lost 17-9, then was eliminated in Week 17 despite a blowout victory over Washington when the Eagles won the NFC East by beating the New York Giants. Garrett spent seven seasons as a player with the Cowboys, starting nine games in place of Aikman. □



In this May 4, 2019, file photo, Flavien Prat on Country House, left, racing against Luis Saez on Maximum Security, third from left, during the 145th running of the Kentucky Derby horse race at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Sports Writer

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Horse of the Year finalist Maximum Security was one of 17 horses formally invited on Sunday to compete in the Pegasus World Cup Invitational lat-

er this month at Gulfstream Park. Breeders' Cup Classic runner-up and McKinzie also earned an invite, as did Eclipse Award finalist Omaha Beach. Maximum Security is an Eclipse finalist in two categories and

Maximum Security invited to Pegasus World Cup race

was first across the line at last year's Kentucky Derby before being disqualified for interference. Past Pegasus runners Seeking The Soul, War Story and True Timber were also invited, as was 2018 Preakness runner-up Bravazo. The other invitees for the \$3 million race on Jan. 25 include Gift Box, Higher Power, Magic Wand, Math Wizard, Mr. Freeze, Roadster, Spun To Run, Tax, Mucho Gusto and Diamond Oops. The field is expected to be cut to 12 by the end of the week. Magic Wand is also invited to run in the \$1 million Pegasus World Cup Turf Invitational, also to be held Jan. 25. Eclipse Award finalist

Mo Forza is on that list of 17 as well, along with Arklow, Channel Cat, Henley's Joy, Instilled Regard, Next Shares, Sadler's Joy, Starship Jubilee, United, Without Parole, Zulu Alpha, Sacred Life, Admission Office, A Thread Of Blue, Mr. Misunderstood and Lucullan. Magic Wand was second in the Pegasus turf race last year, behind only Bricks and Mortar — the likely Horse of the Year when the Eclipse Awards are announced at Gulfstream on Jan. 23. The Pegasus World Cup races will require horses to be medication-free on race day for the first time and will have substantially reduced purses from the

previous three editions of the event. The Stronach Group, which operates Gulfstream, announced the significant changes to the purse structure and race rules last month. Entry fees, which had been as much as \$1 million for past runnings of the Pegasus, will be waived. The inaugural Pegasus in 2017 was then the world's richest race, offering a \$12 million purse to owners who put up \$1 million for a spot in the field. The purse went to \$16 million in 2018. And last year, the turf race was added, so purses went to \$9 million for the dirt race and \$7 million on the grass. □

Clippers get 30-plus from 3 players, beat Knicks 135-132

By **JOE REEDY**
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Montrezl Harrell scored 34 points, Paul George and Lou Williams added 32 apiece and the Los Angeles Clippers bounced back from an ugly loss with a 135-132 victory over the New York Knicks on Sunday. It was the first time in the Clippers' 50-year history they have had three players score at least 30 points.

Los Angeles was up by 15 late in the third quarter and 121-110 with 7:06 remaining in the game when George fouled out. New York scored eight straight points to draw within three and was still within one possession in the final minute when Williams drove the lane and hit a floating jumper with 18.5 seconds left to make it 133-128.

Marcus Morris hit a jumper with 10.4 seconds left to get it back to three, but Williams put it out reach

after a timeout with a pair of free throws.

George, who missed Saturday's 26-point loss to Memphis with left hamstring tightness, posted his seventh 30-point game this season. George was 9 of 14 from the field, including 5 of 6 on 3-pointers, in 32 minutes.

Morris led New York with 38 points and RJ Barrett added 24.

Los Angeles trailed by 16 at the end of the first quarter but put up a 47-point second quarter to lead 76-69 at halftime. That was the most points scored in the second period of an NBA game this season and tied for fourth most in any quarter.

Williams led the way with 18 points in the period, including three straight 3-pointers that tied it at 51 with 7:16 remaining. Harrell had 14 points in the quarter, including 10 of the Clippers' first 13 points during the run. The Knicks went on a 24-8



Los Angeles Clippers' Montrezl Harrell dunks against the New York Knicks during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

run in the first quarter to lead 33-19. New York came into the game making 10.7 3-pointers per game but made four during their spurt while Julius Randle scored seven points.

The Knicks extended their lead to 45-29 at the end of the quarter as they went 19 of 29 from the field. The output was tied for the third-most points scored in the first 12 minutes of an NBA game this season and

marked the first time the Knicks have scored at least 44 points and shot over 70% from the field in the first in nearly 11 years. The last time it happened was also against the Clippers, on March 25, 2009.

TIP-INS

Knicks: Taj Gibson, Morris and Julius Randle received technical fouls during a 21-second span in the second quarter. ... New York is 6-7 under interim

coach Mike Miller, who took over after David Fizdale was fired. ... G Elfrid Payton was out for personal reasons. Frank Ntilikina got the start and had seven points. ... G Dennis Smith Jr. was inactive for the fifth straight game with an oblique strain.

Clippers: F Kawhi Leonard sat out the game as he continues to rest his knee and not play games on back-to-back days. □

Continued from Page 18

No. 5-ranked Medvedev was called for a foot-fault on match point, which he unsuccessfully challenged, but then closed out immediately when Isner netted the next service return.

"I thought he definitely did what he does well, which is make a lot of balls, and so I wasn't even close tonight," Isner said. "I didn't quite serve as well as I needed to, there's no doubt."

The Australians moved atop Group F with a 3-0 sweep of Canada in Brisbane, and Germany's dramatic win over Greece, decided by a super tiebreaker in the doubles, meant the tournament hosts were assured of advancing to the quarterfinals.

German pair Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies rallied for a 3-6, 6-3, 17-15 win in the doubles over Michail Pervolarakis and Stefanos Tsitsipas, who had earlier trounced Alexander Zverev 6-1, 6-4 in the second

singles encounter to get Greece level at 1-1.

Bulgaria beat Moldova to make it two wins from two in Group C in Sydney, before Britain edged Belgium 2-1 with a victory in the doubles.

Britain, beaten in the opening match by Bulgaria, secured the bounce-back win with Jamie Murray and Joe Salisbury coming out on top in the deciding doubles match. Dan Evans leveled it earlier with a 6-4, 6-4 win over David Goffin after Belgian No. 2 Steve Darcis beat Cameron Norrie 6-2, 6-4.

Italy needed victory in the doubles to edge Norway in their best-of-three match encounter earlier Sunday in Perth, and now both teams have 1-1 records in Group D. Simone Bolelli and Fabio Fognini combined to beat Casper Ruud and Viktor Durasovic 6-3, 7-6 (3).

Ruud, who led Norway's opening win over the United States, had beaten

Fognini 6-2, 6-2 in the second singles match to level the tie after Stefano Travaglia's 6-1, 6-1 win over Viktor Durasovic gave the Italians an early lead.

The six group winners and the two best second-place teams advance to the playoffs in Sydney.

Having the home team there could be a boost for sports lovers in a country experiencing its worst wildfire season in recorded history, which has already left 24 dead, 2,000 homes destroyed and burned through large swathes of Australia.

Two days after launching his cash for aces plan to raise funds for the national wildfire recovery effort, Nick Kyrgios pulled out of his scheduled match against Felix Auger-Aliassime because of a sore back. No. 48-ranked John Millman stepped in to win 6-4, 6-2 on his home court.

Kyrgios pledged to donate 200 Australian dollars (\$140



Alex de Minaur of Australia reacts after he won his match against Denis Shapovalov of Canada at the ATP Cup tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020.

Associated Press

for every ace he serves this month. He hit 20 in his opening win and promising more.

Alex de Minaur secured the match for Australia when he rallied from a set and a break down to beat Denis Shapovalov 6-7 (6), 6-4, 6-2 at Pat Rafter Arena.

"I would love to take care of things a bit easier, but you kind of got to play

the cards you're dealt," said de Minaur, who did a little dance on court to celebrate his win. "I went through a little bit of a rough patch ... but I managed to turn things around. So obviously very proud." Australia also won the doubles to complete a sweep, avenging a quarterfinal loss to Canada at the Davis Cup last November. □

Gym class without the gym? With technology, it's catching on

By **CAROLYN THOMPSON**
Associated Press

Grace Brown's schedule at West Potomac High School in northern Virginia is filled with all the usual academics, and she's packed in Latin, chorus and piano as extras.

What she can't cram into the 8:10 a.m. - 2:55 p.m. school day is gym class.

So she's taking that one minus the gym, and on her own time.

The 14-year-old freshman is getting school credit for virtual physical education, a concept that, as strange as it may sound, is being helped along by availability of wearable fitness trackers.

For students whose tests and textbooks have migrated to screens, technology as gym equipment may have been only a matter of time.

Grace, who lives in Alexandria, wears a school-issued Fitbit on her wrist while getting in at least three 30-minute workouts a week outside of school hours. She has an app on her computer that screenshots her activity so she can turn it in for credit.

While online physical education classes have been around for well over a decade, often as part of virtual or online schools, the technology has made possible a new level of accountability, its users say.

"We're asking kids to wear this while they do an activity of their choice, and they can change the activity as they desire, as long as it's something that they understand is probably going to get their heart rate up," said Elizabeth Edwards, department head for online physical education at Fairfax County Public Schools, which includes Grace's high school.

Though a physical education instructor isn't shouting from the sidelines, teachers do guide assignments by setting goals such as fat burn, cardio or peak, relying on the technology to be their eyes and ears. Students also are required to sign in for a weekly 60-minute to 90-minute classroom



Grace Brown, 14, adjusts her fitness tracker at the park where she does her jogging workouts for her "online PE" class, in Alexandria, Va., Friday, Nov. 1, 2019.

Associated Press

session with the teacher.

Teenagers who play soccer, swim or dance all year may satisfy the workout requirements without doing anything extra. Grace has been adding bike rides and jogs to her days.

For her, online PE freed her up to take three elective courses, instead of two in school.

For others, it's a welcome way to take a required class that students otherwise may find socially or physically challenging.

"We definitely exercise more in online PE," Grace said. "There's a lot of standing around in regular PE. Online, I do much harder workouts."

A survey of more than 3,000 fitness professionals by the American College of Sports Medicine named wearable technology the top trend in fitness for 2020.

It's not clear how many schools are embracing the trend. It comes with some cautions.

Technology and the collection of any student data always raises the specter of student privacy concerns. And some worry that students exercising on their own may miss out on im-

portant social concepts such as teamwork.

"There is a difference between physical activity and physical education," said Chris Hersl, former vice president for programs and professional development at SHAPE America, which wrote national standards for K-12 physical education.

"Physical activity is great for the body. We want everybody to move," he said, "but physical education is a class where students are taught how to move their body and the social context in which to do that."

Joliet Township schools in Illinois uses fitness trackers as part of a blended learning conditioning program that has students who sign up for it work out two to three times a week in the gym with an instructor and the other days on their own.

"It's a flexible schedule where they still have in-person physical education classes and there's still instruction happening, but they're able to use the Fitbit to monitor how students are working outside the classroom," said Karla Guseman, the district's associate superintendent for

educational services.

She said it's one of numerous blending learning options that Joliet Township High School offers to give students both more control over the pace and time of their work, and more responsibility to get it done.

"We're trying to give them an opportunity to see what post-secondary might look like," Guseman said, "when you don't meet every day but you're still expected to do work for a course or preparation between class periods."

A virtual school that is part of the Springfield, Missouri, public school district started with a single class -- physical education, said Nichole Lemmon, the creator of the program, called Launch, which uses Garmin fitness trackers.

"Eight years ago, it was the very first online class by our developers to meet a really niche student who could not fit PE courses into their schedule," Lemmon said. "Maybe they wanted to take more honors level courses, or advanced placement, or international baccalaureate classes and PE was hard to fit in, so we allowed them to do it

outside of the school day."

A telling illustration of the technology-driven 24/7 school day is the peak log-in time on the school's portal system: 10:03 p.m.

"They may not be working out at 10 p.m., but that's when they're turning in their workout. The notion that education now runs 7:30-4, 8-3, is really antiquated," Lemmon said, "and our students are begging to be able to have more flexibility in the time of day they learn."

During the past summer session, there were 22,600 students enrolled, and the most popular courses were PE, she said.

Teachers help students set up their fitness devices, entering the student's height, weight and age, and coming up with a target heart rate. As an added layer of instruction and accountability, Launch students are required to send video back to the teacher, who checks their technique as they stretch or lift weights, for example.

"They work with their PE instructor to set a fitness goal and then they get their workout however they want to," Lemmon said. "It really does promote life-long fitness because it's about working out the way they want to, not they're required to do a particular activity in gym. ... We have a lot of kids -- a locker room is their worst nightmare. It's not where they want to be." Grace's mother, Rhonda Brown, remembers how hard gym class soccer and softball games were for her because of blindness in one eye.

"You're talking to someone who was always picked last for every sporting activity. I have nightmares sometimes," she said.

She'd like to see the county go even further and grant waivers from PE to kids that play school sports.

"We're so stuck in the traditional classroom setting. These kids are burning 2,000 calories during a practice and more at every game," she said. "I wish the schools would catch up with the times." □

Catalog retailers see reason for optimism after declines

By DAVID SHARP

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)

— Catalogs, those glossy paper-and-ink offerings of outdoor apparel, kitchenware and fruit baskets, are not yet headed for the recycling bin of history.

Until recently, the future appeared grim for the mailbox-stuffers. A one-two punch of postal rate increases and the Great Recession had sharply cut their numbers. Common wisdom had everything retail-related moving online.

But a catalog-industry rebound appears in the works, fueled in part by what might seem an unlikely group: younger shoppers who find it's sometimes easier, more satisfying and even nostalgic, flipping pages rather than clicking links.

Industry experts say that all those catalogs crammed into mailboxes this holiday season are a sign that mailings have stabilized — and may be growing — after a decline of about 40% since the Great Recession.

New companies are mailing catalogs. And even died-in-the-wool online



This Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2004 file photo shows a selection of holiday season catalogs in Portland, Maine.

Associated Press

retailers like Amazon and Bonobos are getting into the act.

"They're tapping out on what they're able to do digitally," said Tim Curtis, president of CohereOne, a direct marketing agency in California. "They've got to find some new way to drive traffic to their websites."

Catalog retailers slashed mailings, and some abandoned catalogs altogether,

after a major U.S. Postal Service rate increase and the start of the recession in late 2007. Catalog numbers dropped from about 19 billion in 2006 to an estimated 11.5 billion in 2018, according to the American Catalog Mailing Association.

The industry still faces challenges, but there's reason for some optimism, said Hamilton Davison, president of the mailers associa-

tion.

Millennials who are nostalgic for vinyl records and all things vintage are thumbing through catalogs and dog-eared the pages. It's a new demographic helping to breathe some new life into the sector, industry officials say.

In fact, millennials are more likely than baby boomers to visit a store based on

mailings, according to the U.S. Postal Service inspector general.

Sarah Johnson says she loves flipping through catalogs at her convenience — but gets her hackles up when retailers fill her email inbox.

"Promotion emails drive me crazy," said Johnson, 29, of Vernal, Utah. "When there's a catalog lying on the table, it feels like it's my choice to pick it up and flip through it. When it arrives in my inbox it feels like it's imposing on me," she said.

Angela Hamann, another millennial, says she prefers catalogs because it's easier than scrolling through webpages to evaluate a retailer's offering.

"It's a great way to assess what a company has to offer without making a bunch of clicks," said Hamann, 37, of New Gloucester, Maine. During the downturn, catalog retailers reduced the size of the catalogs, slashed the number of pages and became selective about their mailings, said Jim Gibbs from The Dingley Press, in Lisbon, Maine, which prints and mails about 330 million catalogs a year. □

German jobless rate ticks up to 4.9% in December

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's unemployment rate ticked up to 4.9% in December as the labor market in Europe's biggest economy showed some signs of economic weakness, though it remained generally robust. The Federal Labor Agency

said Friday that the unadjusted jobless rate, the headline figure in Germany, was up from 4.8% in November.

In all, 2.227 million people were registered as unemployed. That was 47,000 more than the previous

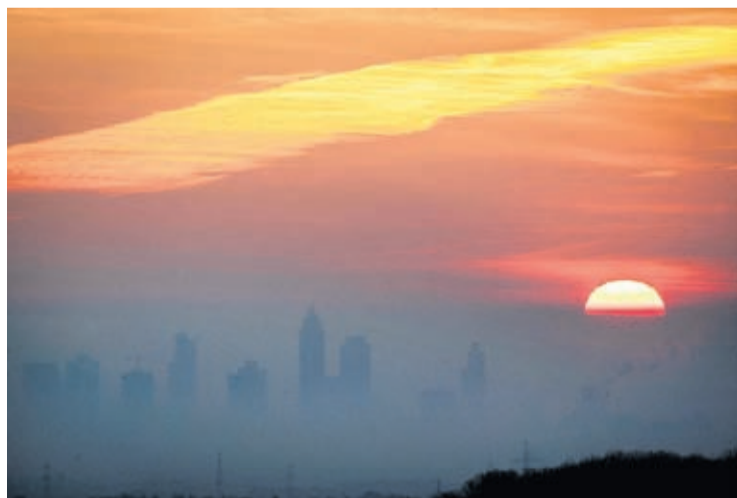
month and 18,000 more than a year earlier.

The seasonally adjusted rate remained at 5%, where it has stood for months.

The economy narrowly avoided a widely antici-

pated recession in the third quarter. It grew 0.1% in the July-September period compared with the previous quarter, when it contracted by 0.2%. Strong domestic spending helped

spark the modest growth. Germany's central bank has said that output likely remained flat in the fourth quarter. □



The sun rises over the buildings of the banking district in Frankfurt, Germany, on a misty Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020.

Associated Press

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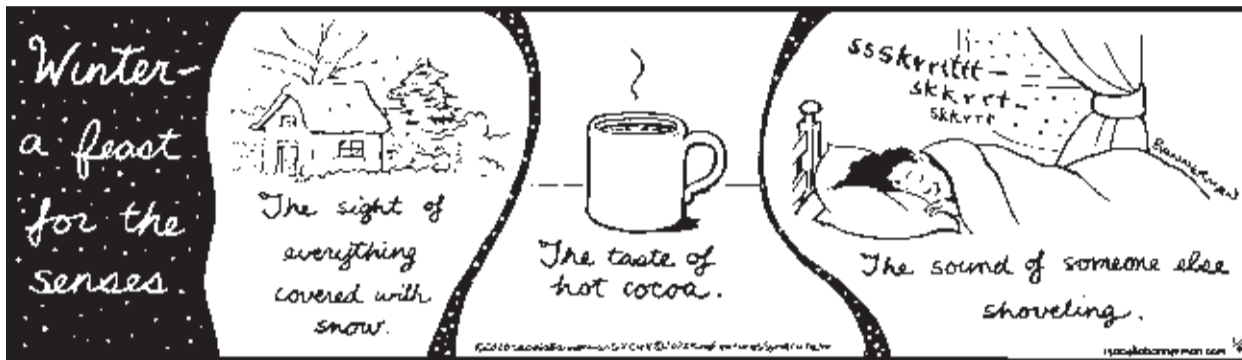
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Mutts



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Baby Blues



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Conceptis Sudoku

4	6			1		2
	9	2		5	7	4
2	7			6		1
		1		3		7
3						9
9	5			1		2
		4	6		5	
8			2			5

Difficulty Level ★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

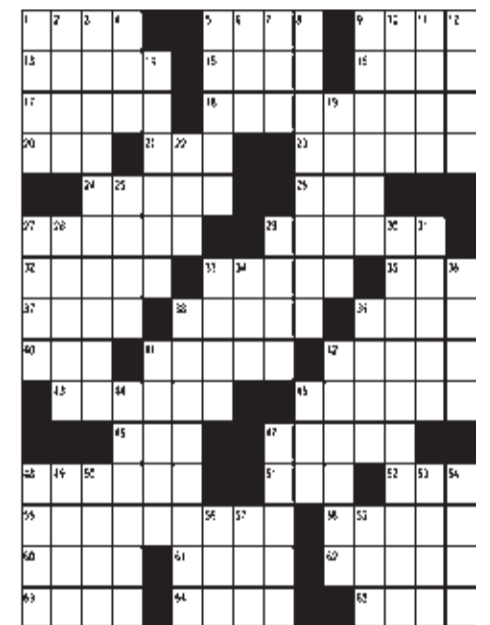
4	8	2	3	1	6	5	7	9
9	5	1	2	7	4	6	8	3
3	7	6	9	8	5	4	1	2
8	1	4	5	6	3	9	2	7
5	9	3	7	4	2	8	6	1
2	6	7	1	9	8	3	4	5
6	2	5	4	3	7	1	9	8
1	3	8	6	2	9	7	5	4
7	4	9	8	5	1	2	3	6

ACROSS

- 1 down lose weight
- 5 up: grate
- 9 Gear
- 13 Subdued
- 15 Veedy
- 16 about, praise highly
- 17 More than enough
- 18 Let's high and dry
- 20 20th letter
- 21 Lad
- 23 Diners
- 24 Actress Roberts
- 26 Sense of humor
- 27 Word before tap or cord
- 29 Fiers
- 32 British trees
- 33 Rabiant
- 35 Wa k- many NYC apartments
- 37 Eras
- 38 For the time presently
- 39 Musketeers or: Stoozes
- 40 Barbie's beau
- 41 Baby chick noses
- 42 Writin's under
- 43 Large beer mugs
- 45 Terror Ennio
- 46 "Wow"
- 47 Absorbent cloth
- 48 Honda sedan
- 51 Trigger's rider
- 52 One of Santa's helpers
- 55 Street-report's state
- 56 Pyle or Dis
- 60 Radio... TV antenna
- 61 Gator's cousin
- 62 Indy 500 & others
- 63 Sketon's Kadod hopper
- 64 Came shelter
- 65 Prescriptions for sport

DOWN

- 1 "Now" in the ER
- 2 Live a poor excuse
- 3 Ostracle
- 4 Singer: It is
- 5 Remains
- 6 Bath's spot
- 7 super, dazed
- 8 Extending one's subscription
- 9 Cave
- 10 "Penny" Bear's song
- 11 "the moon" ealed
- 12 Ties the knot
- 14 Wingers namesakes
- 19 Seven-times-a-week paper
- 22 Lubricate
- 25 Wal'el items
- 27 Pierre's pace: aob:
- 28 Book leaves
- 29 Bowler's target
- 30 Cause of a bumpy plane ride
- 31 Undercover agents
- 33 Nooses
- 34 Stylish, trendy
- 36 Song for one
- 38 Traitor Aine'd
- 39 Grow fatigued
- 41 Wharves
- 42 Attorney
- 44 Self-centeredness
- 45 Pigeon's nose
- 47 Stretch of land
- 48 Sir Guinness
- 49 Fur for some
- 50 Make well
- 53 To dics
- 54...uc admil one's gu 1
- 56 TV's "Car 54, Where You?"
- 57 Prefix for sense or profit
- 59 Sheep's mate



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathers

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

END	ENSUE	SIFT
LOAM	YEARN	ABLE
LANA	DINGO	FEED
HARBINGER	AXES	
LIES	MAR	
APHIDS	SPICIEST	
BRINE	STATE	VIE
OUTS	LOONY	DATA
UNO	BAILS	CEDAR
YERRIBLE	RACERS	
EGR	HALL	
F.G.I	ASSAILANT	
IRON	DOLLS	REAR
RIPE	OLIVE	EACH
SPED	ROPES	TKO

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TIME SHARE FOR RENT

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 wk 35 8/29 - 25 wks left \$1998
 Local 565 9394 until 12/21 or
 508 651 0016
 E-mail: rmwjmw@aol.com

TIME SHARE FOR SALE

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 25 wks left Unit 2314 \$2800
 and Studio Rm 128
 Divi Dutch Village \$1995 or BO
 Divi Village wks 17 Studio 4/25
 24 weeks left \$1800 BO
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 E-mail: rmwjmw@aol.com

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 Date :03/22/20 to 03/29/20 (3)
 03/20/20 to 02/27/20 (2)
 02/21/20 to 02/28/20 (4)

For Rent
Divi Links Golf
 2 BR WK 3 sleep 8 \$2 K
 01/18/20 to 01/25/20
 Studio wk 7 sleep 4 \$1500
 02/15/20 to 02/22/20
La Cabana Beach and Casino
 1 BR wk 3 \$1800
 01/18/20 to 01/25/20

Marriott Ocean Club
 Platinum
 1 BR Ocean View \$9 K
 1 BR Ocean Front \$ 20 K
 2 BR Ocean View \$ 16,5 K
 2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K

Marriott Surf Club
 Platinum
 2 BR Ocean View \$15,5 K
 2 BR Ocean Side \$16,5 K
 2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K
 3 BR Ocean View \$ 28 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix
 2 BR Lock off wk 51/52
 building 7 on the 5th floor
 27 weeks remain \$30 K each
 or \$ 58 K both all in
 2 BR PH wk 1
 building 7 on the 5 th floor
 28 weeks remain \$45 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix
 1 BR WK 2
 building 8 ground floor
 32 weeks remain \$16 K
 1 BR WK 8
 building 6 on the 4th floor
 27 weeks remain \$15 K
 1 BR PH wk 8/9 \$12,5 K each
 14th floor 30/28 weeks remain

Eagle Resorts
 1 BR wk 51 and 52 \$25 K both
 1 BR wk 5/6/7/8 \$750 each
 Ground floor Saturday check in
 1 BR wk 7 \$7 K

Divi Links Golf
 Studio wk 2 \$7,5 K
 Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
 1 BR wk 3 \$8,5 K
 eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 8/9 \$ 9,5 K each
 Eagle 9 with 27 /19 weeks
 remain

Divi Links
 2 BR wk 3 \$22 K
 Eagle 8 with 25 weeks remain
 1 BR wk 4 \$8 K
 Birdie 1 with 20 weeks remain

Divi Village
 Studio wk 1 \$7,5 K
 building C with 24 weeks remain
 Studio wk 6 \$7,5 K
 building F 22 weeks remain

Dutch Village
 Studio wk 52 \$7,5K
Divi Links Golf
 studio wk 1 \$7,5 K
 building 4 28 weeks remain
 Studio wk 5, 7 and 8 \$8 K each
 birdie 4 with 28/27/29 weeks
 remain

Divi Village
 1 BR WK 1 \$8,5 K
 Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
 building D & F
 25 weeks remain on each
Paradise Beach Villas
 1 BR wk 1 and 2 \$12,5K each
 2sd floor pool/ocean view

La Cabana Beach and Casino
 1 BR WK 52 \$9 K
 4th floor Friday check in
 1 BR wk 51/52 \$17 K both
 4th floor Friday check in
 1 BR WK 52 \$11 K
 3rd floor Sunday check in

Caribbean Pam Village
 1 BR wk 52 \$7 K
 1 BR wk 2 \$6 K
 1 BR /2 BR WK 3 \$ 6 K
 1 BR WK 3/4 \$6 K each

House in Ponton
 5 min from every where
 4 BR 3 Bath Pool \$370 K
Tierra Del Sol
 3 BR 2 Bath \$520 K
Le Vent
 3 BR , 2 bath \$650 K
 2 BR WK 5/6 \$7 K each
 25 weeks remain

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Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
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American Airlines	582 2700
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Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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Q&A: How climate change, other factors stoke Australia fires

AP Science Writer

Australia's unprecedented wildfires are supercharged thanks to climate change, the type of trees catching fire and weather, experts say.

And these fires are so extreme that they are triggering their own thunderstorms.

Here are a few questions and answers about the science behind the Australian wildfires that so far have burned about 5 million hectares (12.35 million acres), killing at least 17 people and destroying more than 1,400 homes.

"They are basically just in a horrific convergence of events," said Stanford University environmental studies director Chris Field, who chaired an international scientific report on climate change and extreme events. He said this is one of the worst, if not the worst, climate change extreme events he's seen.

"There is something just intrinsically terrifying about these big wildfires. They go on for so long, the sense of hopelessness that they instill," Field said. "The wildfires are kind of the iconic representation of climate change impacts."

Q: IS CLIMATE CHANGE REALLY A FACTOR?

A: Scientists, both those who study fire and those who study climate, say there's no doubt man-made global warming has been a big part, but not the only part, of the fires.

Last year in Australia was the hottest and driest on record, with the average annual temperature 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit (1.5 degrees Celsius) above the 1960 to 1990 average, according to Australia's Bureau of Meteorology. Temperatures in Australia last



In this image released Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020, from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in Gippsland, Australia, smoke rises from wildfires burning in East Gippsland, Victoria. Associated Press

month hit 121.8 F (49.9 C).

"What would have been a bad fire season was made worse by the background drying/warming trend," Andrew Watkins, head of long-range forecasts at Australia's Bureau of Meteorology, said in an email. Mike Flannigan, a fire scientist at the University of Alberta in Canada, said Australia's fires are "an example of climate change." A 2019 Australian government brief report on wildfires and climate change said, "Human-caused climate change has resulted in more dangerous weather conditions for bushfires in recent decades for many regions of Australia."

Q: HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE MAKE THESE FIRES WORSE?

A: The drier the fuel — trees and plants — the easier it is for fires to start and the hotter and nastier they get, Flannigan said.

"It means more fuel is available to burn, which means higher intensity fires, which

makes it more difficult — or impossible — to put out," Flannigan said.

The heat makes the fuel drier, so they combine for something called fire weather. And that determines "fuel moisture," which is crucial for fire spread. The lower the moisture, the more likely Australian fires start and spread from lightning and human-caused ignition, a 2016 study found. There's been a 10% long-term drying trend in Australia's southeast and 15% long-term drying trend in the country's southwest, Watkins said. When added to a degree of warming and a generally southward shift of weather systems, that means a generally drier landscape.

Australia's drought since late 2017 "has been at least the equal of our worst drought in 1902," Australia's Watkins said. "It has probably been driven by ocean temperature patterns in the Indian Ocean and the long term drying trend."

Q: HAS AUSTRALIA'S FIRE SEASON CHANGED?

A: Yes. It's about two to four months longer, starting earlier especially in the south and east, Watkins said.

"The fires over the last three months are unprecedented in their timing and severity, started earlier in spring and covered a wider area across many parts of Aus-

tralia," said David Karoly, leader of climate change hub at Australia's National Environmental science Program. "The normal peak fire season is later in summer and we are yet to have that."

Q: IS WEATHER, NOT JUST LONG-TERM CLIMATE, A FACTOR?

A: Yes. In September, Antarctica's sudden stratospheric warming — sort of the southern equivalent of the polar vortex — changed weather conditions so that Australia's normal weather systems are farther north than usual, Watkins said.

That means since mid-October there were persistent strong westerly winds bringing hot dry air from the interior to the coast, making the fire weather even riskier for the coasts.

"With such a dry environment, many fires were started by dry lightning events (storms that brought lightning but limited rainfall)," Watkins said.

Q: ARE PEOPLE STARTING THESE FIRES? IS IT ARSON?

A: It's too early to tell the precise cause of ignition because the fires are so recent and officials are spending time fighting them, Flannigan said.

While people are a big factor in causing fires in Australia, it's usually accidental, from cars and trucks and

power lines, Flannigan said. Usually discarded cigarettes don't trigger big fires, but when conditions are so dry, they can, he said.

Q: ARE THESE FIRES TRIGGERING THUNDERSTORMS?

A: Yes. It's an explosive storm called pyrocumulonimbus and it can inject particles as high as 10 miles into the air.

During a fire, heat and moisture from the plants are released, even when the fuel is relatively dry. Warm air is less dense than cold air so it rises, releasing the moisture and forming a cloud that lifts and ends up a thunderstorm started by fire. It happens from time to time in Australia and other parts of the world, including Canada, Flannigan said.

"These can be deadly, dangerous, erratic and unpredictable," he said.

Q: ARE THE AUSTRALIAN TREES PRONE TO BURNING?

A: Eucalyptus trees are especially flammable, "like gasoline on a tree," Flannigan said. Chemicals in them make them catch fire easier, spread to the tops of trees and get more intense. Eucalyptus trees were a big factor in 2017 fires in Portugal that killed 66 people, he said.

Q: HOW CAN YOU FIGHT THESE HUGE AUSTRALIA FIRES?

A: You don't. They're just going to burn in many places until they hit the beach, Flannigan said.

"This level of intensity, direct attack is useless," Flannigan said. "You just have to get out of the way... It really is spitting on a campfire. It's not doing any good."

Q: WHAT'S THE LONG-TERM FIRE FUTURE LOOK LIKE FOR AUSTRALIA?

A: "The extreme fire season in Australia in 2019 was predicted," said Australian National University climate scientist Nerilie Abram. "The question that we need to ask is how much worse are we willing to let this get? This is what global warming of just over 1 degree C looks like. Do we really want to see the impacts of 3 degrees or more are like, because that is the trajectory we are on." □

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Carrie Fisher bio as sharp, endearing as its subject

By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL

Associated Press

"Carrie Fisher: A Life on the Edge" (Sarah Crichton Books; Farrar, Straus and Giroux), by Sheila Weller

"Star Wars" fans may feel a lump in their throats when Carrie Fisher appears in the finale of the world's most popular film series. "The Rise of Skywalker" was supposed to be Princess Leia's movie — and Fisher's character would, at last, take center stage.

As with so much of her life, Fisher's moment instead became another great thing that almost happened, not unlike a childhood upended by celebrity parents, a marriage to singer Paul Simon marked by break-ups, and an acting career hobbled by drug addiction and mental illness. Her public persona as a tough, irreverent truth teller hid a deep streak of insecurity and neediness.

"For all her bravado and charm," a friend told biographer Sheila Weller, "Carrie was as fragile as a butterfly."

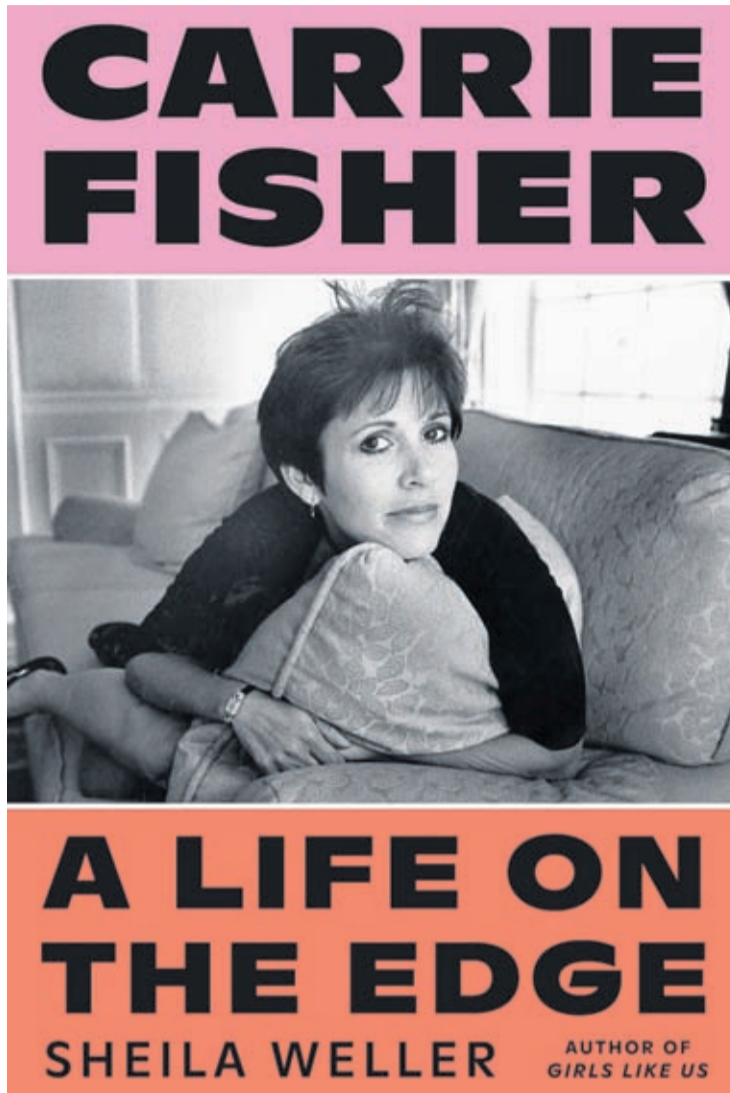
Fisher believed that in her weakness there was strength. Weller writes, "Her honesty about her problems gave her a strength — empathy toward and relief for others with problems;

a unique, wise humor that would grow over the years."

"Carrie Fisher: A Life on the Edge" is a compassionate portrait of a complex personality whose up-and-down life rivals the Hollywood travails of Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland in its mixture of charisma, talent and self-destruction. Fisher's story is a sad one, certainly, but also lively, tart and funny because she was all that and more. So is Weller's engaging book. Tapping Fisher's many friends, she fills her pages with anecdotes illustrating the pains and joys of a life that often went over the edge — way over.

Little Carrie was a precocious charmer — and why not, given her parents were a sparkling actress, Debbie Reynolds, and a teen idol, crooner Eddie Fisher. Their busy careers left Carrie and her brother to be raised by a grandmother and a governess, home at times their mother's hotel rooms. Carrie's relationship with her mother was one of love and co-dependence but also competition for attention. If Reynolds was smothering, her father was distant and self-absorbed.

Reynolds' connections helped Fisher to win her first film role, in 1975's "Sham-



This cover image released by Sarah Crichton Books shows "Carrie Fisher: A Life on the Edge," by Sheila Weller.

Associated Press

poo" with Warren Beatty, and her second, in 1977's "Star Wars." With unexpected superstardom at 19, she put aside her desire to become a writer. She also

made little use of a good singing voice to avoid comparisons with her father. Fisher had been showing signs of bipolar disorder for years, self-medicating with

cocaine and Percodan to try to calm the howling in her head. Recovery from an overdose on the set of the 1981 comedy "Under the Rainbow" came with an official diagnosis, which she rejected in favor of thinking she was just a drug addict. It would be several more years before she realized the emotional highs and lows, manic shopping, racing thoughts and non-stop talking were textbook bipolar behavior.

An overdose in 1985 followed by rehab changed Fisher's life. She not only accepted that she had the dual diseases, she also decided to write about them and the other strains she felt. The autobiographical novel "Postcards from the Edge," published in 1987, led to a new career as a novelist. Writing the screenplay for the movie version opened another venue for her skills — as a script doctor she would pep up "Sister Act" and "Lethal Weapon 3" (both 1992) and other films.

In time Fisher developed a public image as a witty if troubled observer of life in general and Hollywood in particular. One of her reflections: "Money and power don't change you. They reveal you." □

Rose McGowan defends tweet apologizing to Iran after strike

By JOHN CARUCCI

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rose McGowan's tweet that apologized on behalf of the U.S. to Iran for "disrespecting their flag and people" in the wake of an airstrike that killed the country's top general was not anti-American, the actress said in the face of harsh criticism.

"I don't support Iran over America. I want America to be better," McGowan said during an exclusive interview with The Associated Press on Friday.

Her tweet read: "Dear #Iran, The USA has disrespected your country, your flag, your people. 52% of us humbly apologize. We want peace with your nation. We are being held

hostage by a terrorist regime. We do not know how to escape. Please do not kill us."

The head of Iran's elite Quds force and mastermind of its regional security strategy, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, was killed in a U.S. airstrike early Friday. The attack has caused regional tensions to soar.

She faced outrage over Friday's Twitter post, with some suggesting she move to Iran. McGowan acknowledged that her tweet was unusual.

"I woke up, I stupidly looked at Twitter. I was going to the bathroom, and I was like, 'what?'" She added that she doesn't believe the governments of either Iran or the U.S.



Rose McGowan poses for a portrait in New York on Friday, Jan. 3, 2020.

Associated Press

"So, I just thought I would do something a little strange or unusual ... bloodshed should be avoided if you can," she said. "And I kind of just thought, what if I take a really bizarre way

around this. A very strange thought, I understand." McGowan, 46, who is known for her role in the "Scream" movie franchise, was one of the earliest of dozens of women to ac-

cuse Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual misconduct, making her a major figure in the #MeToo movement. Jury selection is scheduled to start this week in New York in a sexual assault case against Weinstein based on allegations from two other women. Weinstein has pleaded not guilty in that case and denies any maintains any sexual activity was consensual.

McGowan has filed a federal lawsuit alleging Weinstein and two of his former attorneys engaged in racketeering to silence her and derail her career as she prepared to accuse him of rape. An attorney for the mogul has called the suit meritless. □



This image released by Disney/Lucasfilm shows Daisy Ridley as Rey in a scene from "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker." Associated Press

By **JAKE COYLE**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The box office in 2020 started off where last year left off: with

"Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker" still on top.

After a historic year, the Walt Disney Co. opened the new year approaching

2020 box office starts off with 'Star Wars' still on top

one milestone and surpassing another. With \$33.7 million over its third weekend in U.S. and Canada theaters according to studio estimates Sunday, "Rise of Skywalker" (\$918.8 million) is closing in on \$1 billion worldwide. While it appears unlikely to match the hauls of the trilogy's previous entries, "Rise of Skywalker" will mark a record seventh \$1 billion 2019 release for Disney.

One of those other six blockbusters, "Frozen 2," on Sunday reached \$1.33 billion, making it the highest grossing film ever directed by a woman in worldwide ticket sales. Jennifer Lee, who co-directed both "Frozen" films with Chris Buck and who now runs Disney Animation, surpasses her own record from the first "Frozen" (\$1.28 billion). "Frozen 2" also charts as the highest grossing animated film, so long as you don't count last year's "Lion King" (\$1.66 billion). Disney considers that remake live-action even though it was largely computer generated.

Holiday holdovers stayed strong, led by a pair of Sony

Pictures releases.

"Jumanji: The Next Level" added \$26.5 million in its fourth week, bringing its domestic total to \$236 million and its global gross past \$600 million.

Greta Gerwig's "Little Women," meanwhile, is becoming an outright hit. The Louisa May Alcott adaptation has been the top adult-oriented choice through the busy holiday season. With \$13.6 million in its second weekend and strong business overseas, "Little Women" has grossed \$80 million worldwide in two weeks. It was made for a modest \$40 million.

The week's only new release also came from Sony. "The Grudge," a horror reboot of the 2004 remake produced by Sam Raimi, opened with \$11.3 million. That was a fair total for a movie that cost \$10 million to make and received some withering reaction from critics and audiences. "The Grudge" scored just 18% on Rotten Tomatoes and engendered a rarely seen F CinemaScore from moviegoers.

Ahead of Sunday evening's

Golden Globes, a handful of contenders added momentum.

Rian Johnson's "Knives Out" held better than any other film in the top 10, dropping just 9% and grossing \$9 million in its sixth weekend. Its global tally stands at \$247.5 million.

Sam Mendes' war film "1917" is poised for its national expansion next week after a second weekend of packed theaters in limited release. It took in \$590,000 at 11 theaters, good for an impressive per-theater average of \$53,100.

And though it was overlooked by the Globes, the Safdie brothers' "Uncut Gems," starring Adam Sandler, is becoming one of A24's biggest box-office successes. It grossed \$7.8 million in its fourth and widest weekend of release, bringing its domestic overall total to \$36.8 million.

After a box office year that was down 4% from 2018, Hollywood began 2020 on the upswing. Ticket sales were up 7.2% from the same weekend last year, according to data firm Comscore. □

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		ROMAN GRIFFIN DAVIS TAIKA WAITITI JOJO RABBIT WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PBP MON-SUN 2:00 4:25 6:50 9:15
ALSO SHOWING!		PAUL WALTER HAUSER SAM ROCKWELL RICHARD JEWELL WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PH MON-SUN 3:20 6:10 9:05
		WILL SMITH TOM HOLLAND SPIES IN DISGUISE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PH MON-THU & SUN 3:40 6:05 8:30 FRI-SAT 3:40 6:05 8:30 10:00 PBP MON-SUN 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 PBP MON-SUN 7:45 5:05
ALSO SHOWING!		ANA MARÍA ARANGO FRANCISCO BOLÍVAR LA PACHANGA SPANISH PBP MON-THU & SUN 7:25 9:30 FRI-SAT 7:25 9:30 11:25
		DWAYNE JOHNSON JACK BLACK JUMANJI: THE NEXT LEVEL WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13 PH MON-SUN 3:05 5:50 8:40 PBP MON-THU & SUN 3:00 5:40 8:20 FRI-SAT 3:00 5:40 8:20 11:00 PBP VIP MON-SUN 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:20
ALSO SHOWING!		DAISY RIDLEY ADAM DRIVER STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13 PH MON-SUN 2:40 5:45 8:50 CXC PBP MON-SUN 2:30 5:30 8:30
		KRISTEN BELL IDINA MENZEL FROZEN II 2 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG PBP MON-SUN 1:05 3:20 5:25
ALSO SHOWING!		SAOIRSE RONAN EMMA WATSON LITTLE WOMEN 2 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG PH MON-SUN 3:10 6:05 9:00
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Disabled Romanian children given chance to shine



In this Nov. 3, 2019, photograph a child with Down syndrome jokingly gestures to the audience while presenting ponchos displaying drawings inspired by children, during a fashion show dubbed "heART Couture" in Bucharest, Romania.

Associated Press

By **VADIM GHIRDA**
ANDREEA ALEXANDRU
Associated Press
BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)

— During Romania's communist era, children with disabilities were shunned, often locked away in institutions or kept at home and deprived of schooling and social interactions.

Recent shows in which children with Down syndrome had the starring roles illustrate how much that has changed since communism fell in 1989.

At one event in Bucharest, youngsters with the genetic disorder staged a fashion show parading their own creations. The children also performed with a ballet ensemble on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in early December.

"The two shows were their chance to shine, to feel important and talented, to feel they bring a contribu-

tion to the world we live in," said Georgeta Bucur, who leads the Down Plus Association, which promotes the inclusion in Romanian society of people with Down Syndrome.

Since the pair of events, there have been others in the Romanian capital. Bucur emphasized the positive impact such events have on children with Down syndrome, though she said that societal prejudice against them still exists. She also stressed the love and warmth the children give to those around them.



"They teach us a new lesson every single day," Bucur said. "Spending even a little time together with them will make anyone change their views." □

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Emotions run high in desert at Palm Springs awards gala

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP) — Hollywood kicked off the year's compressed awards season with an emotional night in the desert.

The Palm Springs International Film Festival's annual opening gala is often treated by honorees as a businesslike, pro forma stop on the industry's self-congratulation circuit. But Thursday found Laura Dern, Jennifer Lopez and Quentin Tarantino wiping away tears onstage at the city's convention center.

Dern, presented with the career achievement award, was surprised with a video of her divorced parents Bruce Dern and Diane Ladd high-fiving as they praised her, saying "You got game."

"That was really moving for me," the 52-year-old actress said. "And every kid kind of wants to see their parents together."

Dern, who stars in "Little Women" and "Marriage

Story," then told the crowd of more than 2,000 dinner guests that she'd been conceived in the nearby mountain town of Idyllwild during production of the 1966 Roger Corman biker movie "The Wild Angels."

Lopez apologized for being overcome with emotion after an introduction from "Hustlers" writer-director Lorene Scafaria.

"I'm so glad to be here but I want to run out the door, I'm so nervous," she said.

The 50-year-old performer, likely to land her first Oscar nomination later this month, noted that women held key roles both behind and in front of the camera on the crime drama.

"To all the talented women out there writing films, producing films and directing films, support one another. And tell your stories," she said.

"Little Women" director Greta Gerwig introduced "Once Upon A Time ... in Hol-

lywood" writer-director Tarantino with effusive praise, saying he "makes movies as if movies could save the world." The 56-year-old director wiped a tear from his eye.

"My joke that I say when people are going to talk about me is I say, 'Speak about me as if I were dead.'" Tarantino said. "And they never do! And you did! Thank you, Greta." "The Irishman" star Robert De Niro, introducing honoree Martin Scorsese, got political when discussing festival founder Sonny Bono.

"Sonny was a Republican, back in the days when Republicans still supported the arts, believed in science, and could put partisanship aside to champion what's best for our country. It's a different time," he said. Also taking home honors from Palm Springs: "Joker" star Joaquin Phoenix, "Judy" star Renee Zellweger, "Pain and Glory" star Antonio



Joaquin Phoenix reacts as he accepts the chairman's award for his role in "Joker" at the 31st annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020, in Palm Springs, Calif.

Associated Press

Banderas and "Bombshell" star Charlize Theron.

The non-televised gala was a low-pressure affair, with winners named in advance and presented with sculpture trophies by friends and directors. But it comes at a key time: Academy voters began casting ballots for Oscar nominations on Thursday, and many honorees will gather again in three days for the Golden

Globe Awards.

Hollywood's awards season, which has typically stretched over more than two months, is shorter than usual this year. In an effort to reduce awards fatigue, the U.S. film academy announced last summer that it had moved the date of this year's Academy Awards to Feb. 9 from its typical late February or early March slot. □

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